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CLAUDE ANET

WHILE THE EARTH SHOOK

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY

RUTH DE ROCHEMONT

Schaeffer, Jean 1868-

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To

FÉLIX FÉNÉON

HIS FRIEND

C. A.

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PART I

I

THE FIRST SHOCK

THE day was Saturday, March 10, 1917. At about three in the afternoon, a young girl came out alone from one of the houses on the Znamenskaia. The wide street, white with snow in the clear sunshine of that winter day, had an unaccustomed air. There were few people to be seen walking along it. Groups of two or three workmen were going up toward the Nicolas Station, while a few women of the common people, their heads wrapped in kerchiefs of beige wools that framed their faces, stood idly on the walks. The girl noticed that a fruit-seller on the street floor of the house was slowly putting up his shutters. Farther up the street, a long line of street-cars was standing and there a great crowd had gathered.

"What is happening," wondered Lydia, "is it another manifestation on Nevski?"

Her fresh, childlike face took on a serious expression, but could not long retain it. The smile that was natural to it reappeared on her mouth, with its slightly full lower lip, deepened two dimples in cheeks rose-flushed with the cold, lighted up two great blue eyes with the limpid purity of a spring,

and the girl, fastening up the collar of her fur coat, set out toward Znamenskaia Place. The nearer she came to the square, the thicker grew the crowd, and about fifty paces away from it she was forced to stop. Troops barred the way. Soldiers of the Litovski regiment were there, arms grounded; the bayonets on their guns caught the light, and, as they marked time on the icy snow to keep warm, their high caps of curly gray sheep's wool, dominating the confused crowd, moved with a curious swaying rhythm.

At times Lydia caught a glimpse of the square swarming with people, and below the equestrian statue of the heavy Alexander III astride a yet heavier horse, she saw the dark line of a file of police. She observed two or three young officers before the troops and was struck by the gravity and the sadness apparent on their white faces. In the groups around her, people were arguing with animation. There was hardly any one there except workers and students. The latter, their caps on their heads, were talking with the workers. She joined one of the groups. A very young student, slim, delicate, frail, with a fresh young mouth, was speaking at the top of his voice.

"Comrades," he was saying, "you know that we are with you. Yes, we will settle together the account of the Government. But the hour is not yet come. We are at war. Let us wait yet a little longer. . . ."

At that moment, a great movement ran through

the crowd. The soldiers, on a curt order, had advanced twenty paces, and, in the confusion of people drawing back, the group was broken up. The young girl, serious now, retraced her steps and decided to go down to Nevski by parallel streets. She had but a single thought,

"Do the workers really intend revolution?"

Memories of things that she had read crossed her mind. One fine summer's day, the French people had taken the Bastille. Glorious day, people said, which had swept the French soldiers on a conquering march across all Europe and even as far as Moscow. In 1905, there had been something which the friends of her father, Prince Serge Volynski, called "disturbances", but to which her own student friends referred as "the revolution". She remembered nothing of it; she had been only five then, and her life of a spoiled only child had not been changed by it. One evening, though, there had been no electricity and they had put her to bed by candlelight. She herself had lighted the candles all around her room. It was like Christmas Eve, and the only memory she had of the crisis was this of a festival.

A revolution while the war was going on—no, that could not be. No one wished it, not even those honest workers, so nice, so kind for all their rough appearance, who were protecting her just now against the jostling of the crowd. How close she felt to them, of the same race! They had the same way of smiling, and very gentle words.

"They may get into a temper," she thought, "like

Papa, but they are good men, incapable of the least harm."

And then she thought of the formidable police of Petrograd and of the garrison that filled the barracks of the city. Even the students were for order; yes, those students, always in a ferment over new ideas, were opposed to a revolution during the war.

"There will be some trouble," she thought, "then everything will return to order."

But whatever she said to herself, her heart was heavy and her head, which she ordinarily carried thrown back a little, with the chin out, was bent toward the walks slippery with half-cleared snow. Soon, however, she was seized by a feeling stronger than anguish,—curiosity. She wanted to see the actors in the drama, to touch as with a finger the immense forces that were stirring there in the street beside her, to look at faces, listen to words, to guess what the flash of eyes was saying. She hurried to reach the Nevski Prospect by Liteini, but at the corner of Liteini she was stopped by the crowd. The workers were going slowly back to the Wiborg quarter, on the other side of the river. She tried to walk in the opposite direction. A tall workman in sheepskin coat and furred leather cap, stopped her and said to her gently,

"You must not go down there, my little dove. There is going to be trouble there."

She took refuge in a doorway. Four young workers came down the street disputing. She fol-

lowed them to hear what it was they were saying.

"You saw, Vasili," said the smallest, whose eyes were shining with pleasure, "the officer gave the Cossacks the command, 'Forward!' but the Cossacks did not follow him. If we have the Cossacks with us, we shall do well."

Thoughtful, Lydia crossed the Fontanka canal, gained the Mikhailovskaia by the Italianskaia, and, slipping along past the Hotel de l'Europe, tried once more to reach the Nevski Prospect. Cossacks were galloping easily along the walks, holding in their little horses. They were young lads, blond and smiling, very careful not to jostle the people in the street, with whom they exchanged pleasant greetings. Once more the young girl felt full of confidence. All this had the air of a parade at a festival. There was no hatred on any face, nor could there be any chance of a misunderstanding between these happy Cossacks and the workers with whom she had just been talking.

"Yes, everything will come out all right, thank God, and in the autumn we will win the war!"

She was very much surprised to discover at that moment that her eyes were filled with tears and that she had been stirred to the very depths. It must be that the atmosphere in which she had been for the past hour had unnerved her more than she had thought.

"We will win the war," she said again firmly.

As she repeated these words, she suddenly heard a shot, then, in a second, a sharp cracking of rifles

that cut the icy air with a tragic sound. A great silence followed, and in an instant she was surrounded by streams of people fleeing from Nevski. She felt herself lifted from her feet, swept away by that wild flood. Struggling for a foothold, pushed from left and right and back, staggering, she ran with all her might toward Mikhailovskaia Place. Her one thought for the moment was to avoid falling. She was no longer master of her actions; she could not combat the fear that had taken possession of her, as it had of the souls of all the witnesses and actors of that scene. As she ran, she watched the fronts of the houses to see whether she could slip through an entrance gate or into a shop. In an instant, every door had been shut. There was no escape anywhere. In the street, the izvostchiks were lashing their horses and the sledges flew over the snow. A grand coachman from the Court, driving a landau bearing the Imperial arms, lost his hat. At a corner of the square, a sledge turning too short, went over.

In her mad flight, the young girl still succeeded to some degree in keeping her head; she noticed at a short distance before her a man in a long coat with a collar of otter fur, who—by what miracle?—was standing motionless. He was very tall, with broad shoulders, and it seemed that nothing could shake him. He did not stir, while around him the crowd ran roaring, like a torrent around a rock. At that moment, she received a blow in the back that made her stumble, and, running a few steps without being

able to regain her balance, she fell at the feet of the man who had just caught her attention.

For a brief instant, she remained there, stunned, half-conscious. When she came to her senses, she found that the man in the long coat had bent over her and was lifting her up.

When she was on her feet again, he turned toward her and she saw his face. It was a strong face, clearly defined, with an unsmiling mouth beneath a small, close-cropped moustache. The eyes were gray and serious. But when he looked at the young girl, whom he still held in the curve of his arm, they lighted at once. She felt very safe near him; her fear had suddenly left her. He gave the impression of strength, calm and sure of itself. And, as he looked at her, he said to her in a voice pleasantly resonant,

"You did not hurt yourself, my child?"

"Not at all," she said with a half-smile. "I do not know what happened. How absurd."

"The thing that is absurd for a young girl like you, is to be out here all alone. How came you to do such a thing?"

He scolded her gently. She stood erect again. It was hard to leave the shelter of that arm. It seemed to shut you into an enchanted world. Also, she foresaw that, alone, she would have no more courage. It must be, however. She freed herself and smiled at him; she had the grace and the charm of a girl, already grown, yet still a child.

"How can I thank you?" she said. "But for you,

I should have been trampled by all those madmen."

Only then did she perceive that they were alone, absolutely alone. The crowd had disappeared, one knew not where. Even the overturned sledge was no longer to be seen. Looking down the Mikhailovskaia, she could see the Nevski Prospect empty in front of the little chapel. But two files of soldiers were visible between the Gostini Dvor and the house that faced the Hotel de l'Europe.

As she looked, a sledge driven by an izvostchik crouching low on his seat, appeared in the avenue and took its way at the slow trot of a tired horse toward the troops. In the sledge, a student lay as if fainting; blood was flowing from his sleeve, and a young woman, bending over him, was stanching it with her handkerchief. The sledge came close, near enough to touch the soldiers, who were standing lined up and motionless. Then the young woman stood up, waving the blood-stained handkerchief.

"What have you done, brothers?" she cried aloud. "See how you are firing on your own!"

There was a slight wavering in the troop, then the soldiers opened their ranks and the sledge crossed the barrier and disappeared.

This tragic scene startled the young girl. She turned to her companion. He was unmoved, and she could not read his face, which seemed to have hardened. Her eyes questioned him.

"It is time to go," he said sadly. "Can I be of any assistance to you? Where do you live?"

It was a tone very different from that in which he

had spoken to her just before. She felt it and answered timidly

"On the Palace Quay, but I can go back by the Millionaia. There is a passage. And," she added in a slightly troubled voice, "I shall be all right alone."

Without a word, he took her arm and they turned toward the Millionaia, a short distance away. The streets were deserted, the quiet complete. It seemed to Lydia that she had had a nightmare. Her left leg was hurting her and she limped a little, but she tried her best not to show it. They walked in silence. At the corner of the Millionaia, he stopped and bent toward her.

"I will take leave of you now," he said. "There is not the least danger, and I must find my sledge in front of the Hotel de l'Europe. I have to go to the Duma."

He spoke curtly, without explanations, but again his voice had that caressing inflection that the young girl had noticed before, when he addressed her for the first time. She did not know what to say. It was little pleasing to take leave thus of this friend. . . . The word gave her pause, a friend of a half-hour, at most. But a friend . . . is it not some one on whom you can depend, some one who protects you . . . ?

"We shall meet again," she said.

"God grant it," he replied.

He bowed, pressed her hand firmly, and was gone.

Alone, Lydia hesitated for an instant, then decided to go through a little side street to her home. In two minutes she arrived at the Palace Quay. The sun had just set. It was five o'clock. A soft light fell from the golden clouds on the magnificent landscape before her: the Neva with the snow still covering its ice; at the left, the single span of the Palace Bridge; at the right, the massive piles of the Troïtski Bridge, and facing her, like some great beast crouched at the edge of the river, the low and solid buildings of the Fortress of Peter and Paul. From the low mass of the buildings, the spire raised its point to the heavens, so high that it seemed it must catch in a cloud, slim as a needle, its gold patina seeming to keep something of the glow of the sun that had just sunk below the horizon. A calm such as one finds only in these admirable northern countries brooded over all nature.

"Yes, everything is there," said Lydia to herself, "everything is there in its place, just as it was yesterday."

And, without knowing why, she felt a wave of happiness rising within her.

The residence of Prince Volynski had a rather insignificant façade. But, back of the small drawing-rooms that looked out on the Neva, one found a gold and white ballroom, a gallery of paintings, a whole suite of rich and magnificent apartments, furnished in the distinguished style of the early reign of Nicholas I.

Beyond the triple doors that protected the house from the cold, one came to a foyer that was warm even in that year, in spite of the war, in spite of the shortage of coal and of naphtha. The factories might lack fuel, but the old residents of the capital had taken precautions far ahead and their cellars well supplied with coal, their courtyards filled with wood piled to the level of the third story, assured them a comfortable winter.

From the time that she came home and until one or two o'clock in the morning, Lydia usually stayed with her father.

Prince Serge Volynski was a man already old, but worn out rather by illness than by the years. His stiffened legs were growing useless, and the Prince rarely left a little room lined with books, the window of which looked out over the Neva and which was furnished very simply.

Day after day, he sat in a great armchair between the table and the fireplace, a black and white plaid over his knees and an ivory-headed cane within reach of his hand. Although the house was heated by steam, the Prince had a wood fire kept burning in the fireplace from October until May, and one of his favorite diversions was attacking the burning logs with great blows of a poker at least four feet long. And, as he poked the fire, he talked to the logs, addressing to them words interrupted by fits of coughing that shook his great body, excessively thin, and his hollowed face, with its thin, sharp nose and its eyes deep and sunken beneath brows that bristled

with black hairs, although his beard, cut in a point, was already white.

"You can't escape, my dear," he would say to a log, showering it with blows of his poker. "You'll have to submit."

And clumsily he would push and turn it until it burst into flame.

At other times, he talked with the logs, saying:

"Where did you come from, eh? Do you remember the spring mornings in Finland, when you still had snow about your feet, but when the sun was already playing in your branches, how you felt the quiver of new life stirring in your sleeping heart and how the buds at the ends of your branches swelled almost painfully in their eagerness to open? And what a journey to come here! The beautiful painted barges that a tug drew across Lake Ladoga! And here you are, my dear. . . . You are fulfilling your destiny, which is to warm the old bones of Prince Serge Volynski!"

Often Lydia, lost in the depths of the sofa, her lovely dishevelled blond hair a radiance about her face, listened to her father's conversations with the logs. He had the gift of making what he said alive and of casting the spell of long dreams over his child, who sat without a word, wide-eyed. How she loved this father of hers! There was between them an understanding so deep that it defied analysis and seemed to Lydia no less than miraculous. Whatever the words that they exchanged, she felt in a look, in a silence, in an inflection of the voice, that she was

for him something unique in the world and that she could never have for any one else the feeling that she had for this sick old man with the eyes of fire.

Her relations with her mother were very different. The Princess Helene had been very beautiful, very much courted. For a long time, she had had no child. It was only when she was nearly thirty that a daughter, Lydia, had been born to her. The Princess had continued to lead a brilliant life; then, little by little, as age came upon her, she withdrew from the world. She went out less often, narrowed the circle of her acquaintance. She took to living almost entirely in her own rooms, occupying herself no one knew how, for she did not even direct her own household. In the summers, she no longer accompanied her husband and her daughter to their country place at Petrovskoë, near Smolensk. She rose later every day, had a horror of any light that was not artificial, sat up all night and went to bed in the morning. When the war came, she was already almost a recluse, and she met it by shutting herself in completely. She suffered only the presence of a very old friend, General Vassilief, who for more than twenty years had flamed for her with the most passionate of platonic loves. He passed long hours with her every day and dined regularly at the house on the Palace Quay. In her isolation, the Princess retained the most charming, the most lovable character, the most sustained equable disposition. She saw little of her husband and her daughter, yet missed them greatly. Lydia loved her tenderly, as one

loves a weaker person who has need of protection, but there had never been between them the perfect intimacy that existed between the girl and her father.

Of late, her father sometimes teased her.

"Eh, little one," he would say, "you grow, you're a woman now. Soon a fine officer will come and carry you off. Ah, if he does not treat you well, let him beware!"

And his lean hand would brandish his cane.

But Lydia always answered,

"I do not like the young men, Papa. They have nothing to say that interests me. And then, I am only a little girl, you know."

The Prince would cough to hide his emotion.

On the day of her adventure, when Lydia entered the room, her father was reading the evening paper. There was in it not a word of the events that had been agitating the capital since the evening before. A censorship more powerful than that of the police was suppressing news of the disorders. The Emperor was at General Headquarters, eighteen hours from Petrograd; the front—quiet as usual during the six months of winter. Which did not, however, prevent the military critics from writing two columns on this negation of war. Only under the heading "Supplies" was there news that might cause uneasiness in attentive readers of the paper. There one read that coal was coming through badly, that carloads of wheat were expected from Siberia, but that

for the moment the reserve in the city was extremely low.

Lydia was in the habit of telling her father all that she had seen and done during the day, but she surmised that if she told him that troops had fired on Nevski, the Prince would be alarmed and, also, that she might be prevented from going the next night to the house of a friend, where she was to dance. She confined herself, therefore, to explaining that the Nevski Prospect was barred by the police and to giving a thousand details of the conversations that she had held with the workers, not forgetting to mention the peace-making rôle of the students of the Polytechnic Institute.

The Prince listened in silence.

"I hope," he said finally, "that that shame will be spared us."

And he began to ram the logs in the fireplace, showering them with blows of his poker.

Two days later, in a unanimous movement, the soldiers of Petrograd went over to the people. The revolution was accomplished almost without bloodshed. In these early days, although the public order was hardly disturbed, the capital felt a deep, secret anguish, of which no one spoke. All pretended to ignore it and mutual felicitations on the coming of new times were in order. The terror was, nevertheless, perceived by every one and constantly revealed, in spite of all effort, by some sudden gleam

in the eyes, by an involuntary trembling of the voice, or a too loud laugh. That anguish was caused much less by any fear experienced during the struggle than by the uncertainty of the morrow. It seemed that the great ship that bore the fortune of Russia had suddenly lost its pilot and its crew and was entering, unmanned and with all sails set, on a stormy sea sown with reefs.

II

A YOUNG GIRL

LYDIA'S most intimate friend was her cousin, Paul Volynski, a boy of twenty, with whom she had played as a child and over whom, ever since, she had exercised a despotism that he accepted with the greatest willingness. Paul had enlisted very young in the first year of the war, had been wounded in 1916, and sent to a hospital in Petrograd; then he had entered the School of the Junkers, the training school for officers, in the Winter Palace, where the Czar Paul I had been assassinated. This was a scant ten minutes' walk from his uncle's house, where he was to be found in all his free hours.

He was a tall lad who, in spite of the war, in spite of his wound and his twenty years, had kept the face of a child, with fine eyes, blue like those of his cousin, which made all the women in the street turn to look after him. But seeing them, Paul would blush and hasten his steps. The first Sunday of the revolution, he came to luncheon with Lydia. He had scarcely seen her since the change of government, and he had much to tell her of the events of the week and of the emotions that he had felt.

"You know," he said to her as he came in, "last

Sunday was the most terrible day of my life. I thought that I should kill myself. We were quartered in the school; we knew what was going on in the city and heard the firing on Nevski. Then, imagine, about one o'clock there was a rumor that we were to go down to the street under arms, to support the police. Immediately, I saw us drawn up on the Prospect and in front of us the workers challenging us. The officer called on them to disperse, and they continued to advance on us. And I saw their eyes; there was no anger in them, I understood that clearly. It was some inexpressible force that drove them upon us. At that moment came the command, 'Present arms!' and then I thought . . ."

"But, Paul," interrupted Lydia, who had grown pale as she listened to her cousin, "you have not been on Nevski. . . ."

"Indeed, no, I have not been there, but I am telling you what I thought when we were told that we were to be called into the streets and how I saw then, as I have told you, what would happen there. My emotion was so great that I thought that I should kill myself rather than go there."

He was still shaken by the thought of the dramatic struggle that had gone on within him.

"Thank God, the order did not come," he said.

After luncheon, they went out and, by way of the square in front of the Winter Palace, they came to the great highway of the revolution, the Nevski Prospect. The weather was mild and foggy. A heavy storm had come the preceding Friday, and piles of

fresh snow still encumbered the streets. But the fresh snowfall had put an end to the cold wave from which the people of Petrograd had been suffering cruelly, and, although it was still freezing, one could sense in an occasional breeze of warmer air the coming thaw.

Nevski had its accustomed Sunday air, and two lines of promenaders, the most of them wearing the red cockade, were walking in opposite directions on the sidewalks. There was a great number of soldiers, idle, wandering about. They seemed to have little idea what to do with the liberty that they had won, except that they profited by it to neglect to salute the officers they met, who had now replaced the shoulder-straps on their cloaks. However, they were not concealing a certain naïve joy. Lydia spoke of it to her cousin. He replied quickly,

"They are happy because they know that they are not going to fight any more."

"The poor things, it must be admitted that it is quite natural," said Lydia ingenuously.

Paul, after a moment's thought, smiled and said pleasantly,

"You are right, darling, being in the trenches is not amusing. Look," he added, pointing to a group of soldiers, each carrying a bag. "Do you know where they are going, those chaps? They are going to the Nicolas Station to take the train that will carry them back to their village. For them the war is ended. And you may be very sure that they have no papers of leave in their pockets. Do you know what

they are calling them already? 'Soldiers on voluntary leave' . . . I should like very well," he sighed, "to be a soldier on voluntary leave; we would go together to the country, to our place, this summer, instead of my following courses and going through training at the Military School. When is all that going to end . . . ?"

His charming face took on a disconsolate expression.

Just then, they heard behind them a loud flourish of trumpets playing a military march. A few companies of a regiment were arriving on Nevski, a band at the head. Lydia and Paul waited to see them pass and recognized the uniform of the Préobrajenski regiment. The new thing about the spectacle was that the ranks of the soldiers were bristling with red flags and with banners of the same color bearing large white inscriptions, and the surprising thing was that one read on these banners such phrases as "War to complete Victory" and "Fatherland and Liberty". The soldiers marched with that regular and heavy tread that gives to the defiling of a Russian regiment something unique, an impression as of a force massive and irresistible. As they passed, the crowd acclaimed them. A burst of enthusiasm swept every soul. In the last week, who had had time to think of the war? And here it was appearing anew! This time, the red flag would lead Russia to victory over her ancient enemies. Lydia clapped her hands, and down the flaming face of Paul tears were running.

Why was it that at that very moment Lydia had

to hear behind her, in a group of people, a whispering voice that said,

"So long as it is only a question of talking, we shall never be in default. I should like to see the reception that this same regiment would give to the order to send a relief to the front."

It seemed to the young girl that a cold douche had fallen over her. She turned quickly to learn who had hurled those words. She saw behind her a young officer of the artillery of the Guards, with a lean, clean-shaven face, arched eyebrows, and long, thin lips. He was of medium height and stood very straight. His look was icy and piercing. He displeased her infinitely.

"That man is horrible," she said, "let us go away."

But she had no further desire to walk and led her cousin back to the house.

The young officer of the artillery of the Guards looked at the clock in the tower of the Municipal Building. It was half-past four. He set out walking briskly toward the Karavannaia, where he lodged almost across the street from a garage that sheltered a detachment of armored cars. In his room, he found two young men waiting for him. One wore an officer's uniform; the other was in civilian clothes. A long and involved discussion of political matters began at once among these three men.

The artillery officer, Leon Borissovitch Semeonof, who had received a scientific training, chose to divide

his discourse into clearly separated parts which he enumerated, with a certain pedantry, as "first", "second", and "third", adding subdivisions under A and B and the like. He had, nevertheless, real talent as an orator, speaking with fire and directness. His colleague, a Cossack officer with the figure of an athlete, listened uneasily, interrupting him every moment to ask an explanation or to raise an objection, which Leon Borissovitch, with three words in a dry tone, reduced to nothing. At such moments, he turned on his discomforted adversary the same look that had frozen Lydia's enthusiastic soul a few hours before on Nevski.

The third member of the group remained silent. He bore the name, well known in the social-revolutionary party, of André Ivanovitch Spasski. He had been in Siberia for some years, then in exile. On the declaration of war, which came at a time when he was again permitted to reside in Petrograd, he had attracted attention by his patriotic ardor, had made speeches that caused a sensation, and had written articles in which he declared that, so long as the war lasted, a Russian could have no enemy but the foreign enemy and that any internal political strife was criminal. He had been showered with insults by the exiled leaders of the revolutionary parties. He had joined the army, been sent to the front, and later sent back again because of his health. Spasski was a man who talked little, who had no brilliant qualities, but one read in his rather massive face a rare energy and his keen eyes inspired

confidence. He spoke gently, but one felt that he had reflected long on what he said and that he would not easily be shaken.

Semeonof was reaching the close of his discourse, which he ended thus concisely:

"I sum it up thus," he said. "What have we before us? An honest Government, composed of the best that there is in Russia, our dear Cadets, upright men, theorists, orators. Of political experience, not the shadow, and where would they have got it, poor things? It is not in the zemstvos that one learns to govern men. I concede that this Government may have all the merits in the world, but it is like Roland's mare that had every quality, only she was dead. Where is their authority? Nowhere. . . . You will tell me that they represent the moral forces of the Empire. In hours of crisis, I believe not in moral forces, but in bayonets. Do you see Lvof raising a guillotine on the square of the Winter Palace and shortening his political enemies by the length of their heads? The great French revolutionaries made no mistake; Dr. Guillotin's machine had no idle days on the Place de la Concorde. That is why the savage energy of the Jacobins triumphed and the Tricolor conquered Europe.

"As opposed to the Government, there is the Soviet, still a chaos, but one in which I discern all the obscure forces that are stirring in Russia. In this Soviet, you will find among socialist-revolutionaries or democrats as much talent as among the Cadets. Without doubt, an equal politi-

cal inexperience, but a more definite program and one that goes more directly to the masses than that of our liberals. With equal inexperience, a more alluring program. But the most important point of all is that the Soviet has the material power, the bayonets of the soldiers who have made the revolution. Against that, there is no argument. I go where the power is; I have had myself chosen by my company as its representative in the Soviet. It is there that the future lies, it is there that I shall work."

The voice of the orator had spoken these last words with a singular force. He ceased speaking. There was a prolonged silence. Spasski's eyes were following Semeonof who was walking nervously about the room, for it was a serious determination of principle that was leading this former officer of the Guards to join the socialist Soviet of Petrograd.

After some minutes, Spasski broke the silence with three words that filled the room and seemed to take something like palpable volume:

"And the war?"

He said nothing more. Semeonof stopped short. He had grown pale. He hesitated a moment; then, making his decision, he replied,

"The war is finished. This country wants no more of it. The revolution raises new and most serious questions. When they shall have been solved, then only will we make another war, in our own time, of our own choice. The future is to the men who see clearly."

There was defiance in the way in which he spoke

these words, as if, being perhaps not entirely certain of his thought, he sought to impose it upon himself by a bold assertion.

Again there was a silence, more weighty than the former, so that even the Cossack officer found it at last unendurable. He rose and walked to the window. It was already dark. In the square, the light of the street lamps revealed a group of soldiers in front of the garage. In the room, there were a few moments more of conversation on casual subjects, of no importance. Then Spasski and the Cossack officer took leave of their host. As they were parting in the street, the officer asked,

"And you, André Ivanovitch, what are you going to do?"

"I shall still be in Petrograd for ten days," Spasski replied. "But, shall I confess it? All my life I have desired the revolution, and now when it is granted to me, it frightens me, for it comes in the midst of war and Russia can never support that double burden. In my opinion, we must settle our account with the foreign enemy first. I am going to rejoin the army. We shall have millions of deserters. How shall we keep the soldiers at the front? How can we make them understand that they should fight for the defense, at the same time, of Russia and of the revolution? Perhaps it is impossible. Anyway, I am going to try it."

The weeks went by, bringing each day a rich harvest of varied and surprising happenings; con-

versations took on a sadder note, the tone of the newspapers grew more somber and Lydia declared herself more and more incapable of unravelling the inextricable tangle of facts that they presented to their readers. On the reading of them a mortal weariness followed. To begin again every morning the same lugubrious articles, to find the same pessimistic words, these incessant and, moreover, contradictory repetitions, it was enough to weary the intelligence most eager to understand. She closed her mind to all that was reasoning, explanation, commentary. She accepted the revolution as a spectacle, without seeking to learn what the end would be. Taken from this angle, these were days worth the living.

With her friends, with her cousin Paul, she went all about Petrograd, watching the leaves come out on the trees in the gardens and the red flags flower on the venerable walls of the old Palace of the Czars. In the streets, already, all the old formality had been abolished and the unwritten laws that governed the rights and duties of pedestrians had vanished with the old régime. A superficial fraternity reigned among all people, whatever the sentiments hidden in the hearts of beings sprung from the most widely different social ranks. Nothing was more amusing than to walk along Nevski, going from one group to another, listening to impromptu orators, talking with the soldiers and with the passers-by.

The soldiers were for Lydia the object of unfailing interest. They kept the same goodfellowship, the same simplicity of soul, the same natural kindli-

ness, the openheartedness that she had always felt before in her relations with the peasants and the workers. Left to their own devices, many of them had gone back to their villages, but a great number preferred to enjoy the leisure of a sojourn in the city and were prolonging it. They took interminable rides on the street-cars, to which the Government, as recompense for the heroes of those March days, had given them free access. To fill their idle hours in a lucrative fashion, they had hit upon the idea of becoming open-air merchants, and in this new occupation they gave proof of remarkable ingenuity. Posted at the corners of streets or in entrance gateways, they offered passers-by cigarettes, flour, sugar, or oatmeal, appropriated without doubt from the regimental storehouses, as well as wooden-soled galoshes, pork, bonbons, and chickens from more obscure sources.

From one of them, Lydia purchased a pair of little dancing slippers for the sum of seventy rubles, and dancing with her friends in the evening, she said,

"The revolution has given me an excellent bootmaker and one very reasonable in his charges. It is Vassili, a soldier of the Préobrajenski. He is installed at the corner of the Morskaia."

She laughed at her cousin Paul, who did not find the same pleasure in the spectacle that the street offered.

"It is not a play at the theatre, Lydia," he sometimes said.

And his childlike face would take on a gravity that made his irreverent cousin laugh aloud. A moment, he would try to remain serious, but, since he was young and in love, he could never resist long, but would begin laughing heartily with Lydia.

They went one day to the Palace on the Kchechinsskaia, on the other side of the river, at the end of the Troïtski Bridge. Lenine, with his marvellous sense of the effective setting, had, from the moment of his arrival in Russia, taken possession of the dwelling of that dancer famous for her Imperial lover. He had made it the Mecca of Communism, and the Government could not find the handful of soldiers necessary to drive him from it. From its balcony, he harangued the crowds, promising them in the near future the overturning of bourgeois society, the advent of the proletariat, and paradise on earth. It was the fashion in Petrograd to go and hear this formidable leader of Bolshevism, and Lydia was too curious to deny herself so novel a spectacle.

It was a lovely day at the end of April. The infinite blue of the clear sky arched over the city and was reflected in the flooding waters of the Neva, as the two young people walked along the quays. Paul stood very straight in his junker's uniform, with its great cloak of the color of hare's fur. He had no interest in Lenine, but only in Lydia. He would have followed her to the ends of the earth, once the war was ended. He was just a boy, very simple and for the moment very unhappy. As long as the

war continued, he must think of nothing else.

He had created for himself a mystical idea of it; it was the first and only duty. But, since the revolution had broken out, who was giving any attention to the army? It was breaking up like ice beneath the sun. At the training school for officers, the faith that sustained the spirit of the school had vanished and every one, in the midst of the general confusion, was waiting for the inevitable peace that the revolution would sign.

While the very officers of the army were leaving the front, the junker Paul Volynski was still dreaming of going to fight the enemy. He knew that in the Southwest General Broussilof was preparing an offensive, and he had asked to be transferred to one of the regiments that would take part in it. But could soldiers still be found who would be willing to follow their officers? And Paul, keenly imaginative, saw himself advancing alone over open country toward the enemy's trenches, from which was coming a hurricane of machine-gun fire. . . . He must leave Lydia. Would he find her again in Petrograd? Would she wait for him? Without her, what would be the use of living? He had resolved to ask her the question on which all his life depended. But, from day to day, he put it off, feeling her to be so near, yet so far away from him, so very dear a friend, but so far from the feelings that burned in his heart.

Meanwhile, they had crossed the Troïtski Bridge and were approaching the house on the Kchechins-

skaia. Before the façade, which overlooked gardens extending to the Prospect Kamenno-Ostrof, was assembled a crowd in which mingled business men and workers, men of fashion and soldiers, faithful followers of Lenine and curiosity-seekers. A red flag floated above the roof, and two others decorated the balcony where the prophet appeared to his people.

Lydia, who did not want to miss anything of the spectacle, slipped little by little into the front ranks of the listeners. She had a way of her own of gaining ground and of smiling at those she disturbed in such fashion that they let her pass without objection. And Paul followed her.

A Jew with crisply curling hair appeared first on the balcony and began to harangue the crowd. Some one near Lydia called him by name: Zinovief. He was the favorite disciple. With the master and under the protection of the Imperial authorities, he had crossed Germany a fortnight before. He had a fat, round head that seemed set directly on his shoulders. He spoke with a dizzying rapidity, as if obliged to say in ten minutes what would, under other circumstances, take him an hour.

Lydia stood open-mouthed, and when he had finished, she turned in stupefaction toward her cousin. She had paid not the slightest attention to what the speaker said, so completely had she been absorbed in following the rapid flow of words all joined together and seemingly said in a single breath.

Applause burst out in the crowd, amazed at such a tour de force. It redoubled suddenly.

Lenine had just appeared.

The man who stood on the balcony, holding the rail with his two white hands, astonished the young girl. She had expected to see a powerful tribune, with a face convulsed with passion, a monster of the type of Danton, whose picture she had seen in histories. And here before her was a little bourgeois, placid, benign, smiling, unctuous. He was dressed correctly, his linen was white, and his cravat properly tied.

He had a dull skin, small eyes, slightly slanting, a carefully brushed blond mustache and beard, and his thin hair was arranged with care over his bald crown. His manner of speaking, too, was like the man himself. A moderate use of gestures, no raising of the voice, none of that dazzling imagery dear to orators at public gatherings, which the crowd watches for and acclaims. No, he began in a sedate tone a series of abstract reasonings, without color, without force, which he supported with quick little gestures or emphasized by patting his hands.

He spoke briefly, but his partisans applauded him at length.

As they crossed the bridge on their way home, Lydia did not conceal her disappointment from her cousin.

"Is that all that he is, Lenine?" she said. "Does he seem to you very terrifying? He looks like a

bookworm. I imagine that Danton and Robespierre had a very different bearing. He did not even frighten me . . ."

But she paused. She had at that instant seen near her the man who had come to her assistance on the first day of the revolution. He was just taking leave of a certain Ivan Choupof-Karamine who lived on the ground floor of a house on the Millionaia, just back of the house of Prince Volynski, from which it was separated only by a very large courtyard. Ivan Choupof-Karamine was noted for his biting tongue, his vices, and the splendor of his hospitality. He had married a woman twenty years younger, Nathalie, whose origin no one knew, but who had, by art and artifice, made his house one of the first in Petrograd.

Lydia did not like either of them. Nevertheless, she decided to speak to Choupof. She wanted to know who it was with whom he had been talking.

"What, Lydia Serguevna," said Choupof, "you do not know him? His life is a romance. As a young man, he had every success in the world. At thirty he fell in love with a very beautiful young girl, married her, and since then one never sees him. Except on business, he never goes out. That has lasted fourteen years, now. He has never tired of her. Nor she of him, that goes without saying. Women cling, my little friend, how they cling . . . ! They have three children . . . "

"You have not told me his name," interrupted Lydia in a sober voice.

"Nicolas Vladimirovitch Savinski, president of the Bank of the North."

Prince Serge Volynski had his own way of feeling and judging events. Of all that was taking place in the capital, nothing surprised him. He had made the sign of the Cross over Petrograd, which he called an "accursed city". Petrograd could not astonish him by any evil. It was a creation of Antichrist, a cosmopolitan city full of Jews and foreigners, seat of an immense and rotten bureaucracy, built, moreover, on the marshes, unhealthy, fever-breeding, in the clouds half of the year, a center of moral corruption that infected the pure elements that all Russia was constantly sending to it and that in a brief time made of a sound man a thing without a name in any language. Thus he found a bitter pleasure in noting the calamitous series of events that was taking place there. He had applauded the enthusiastic reception that Lenine had received at the Finland Station and had been prodigiously amused to see him installed in the Palace on the Kchechinsskaia. The news that was brought to him of the Soviet and of the swarming of the Jews who were multiplying there filled him with satisfaction.

"They grow like mushrooms after the storm," he said. "That rottenness will cover everything."

At other moments, he called down the fire of Heaven on the capital.

"May one stone not rest upon another, otherwise all Russia is lost."

More often, however, he denied himself these morose joys. At the bottom, only one thing deeply concerned him: what were the effects of the revolution on his estate?

He had inherited considerable holdings in the government of Smolensk. He had been born there. This man who gave way in everything to his wife, with whom he had been deeply in love, had shown firmness with her only once in his life. When she was expecting her first child, he had insisted that she should live in the country during her pregnancy and that her child should be born there. He could not consent that his heir should be born in Saint Petersburg. The beautiful Princess Helene took this exile badly. To give up the enchantments of the capital was hard for her, but for once the Prince was inflexible. Two weeks before the event, he summoned to his estate the best obstetrician in Moscow, and Lydia saw the light, as the Prince said, "on true Russian territory".

Since that time he had spent all his summers there, except for a few journeys to other countries, where he sometimes went to join his wife, who preferred the German watering places or the French beaches. The Prince had improved his property. He obtained from it profitable returns in wood and hay and cheese, but the important business, his personal creation, was the dairy. He had put it under the direction of a Swiss by the name of Schwarz, who had brought cattle from his own

country and from Denmark to crossbreed with the cattle on the estate, which were descended from animals given to one of the Prince's ancestors by Catherine the Great herself. Schwarz had a herd of four hundred head; the greater part of the milk was sent each day to Moscow, and with the rest he made Gruyère cheeses famous in Russia.

When they learned of the change of Government, the peasants were slow to rouse. For a long time they took pleasure in declaring that the land belonged to them, but between it and them there were many obstacles to overcome that they did not know how to attack. The letters of Schwarz gave curious and disturbing details about which the Prince thought long.

"The peasants were cutting wood in the forests . . . The peasants were appropriating the fodder."

Finally, the news came one day that the peasants had taken a dozen cows.

When he received the letter, the Prince burst into a rage and the logs in the fireplace, rammed with blows of the poker, seemed to cackle in unison with his fury. Wood, fodder, wheat, that was of little consequence. But to touch his cows, those valuable animals selected with such care and improved by knowing crossing, that could not be endured!

"That ass of a Schwarz," cried the Prince, "doesn't know enough to defend himself. Doesn't he even understand our Russian peasants, after the

twenty years that he has been with me? My cows in their dirty stables! I should like to see it! I shall have to go there!"

There was no way to make him listen to reason. Not the extreme difficulty of travelling on lines encumbered with the crowds of deserters, nor the impossibility of reserving a compartment, nor his own health that was growing worse, his legs more and more useless, nor the necessity of being wheeled in a chair along the platforms of the Nicolas Station, could deter him.

His wife made an effort to persuade him to pass the summer in Finland with Lydia. She would not accompany him there, she said, her health forbidding a journey of even a few hours. She was firmly decided to see nothing whatever of the revolution; the spectacle of a station filled with soldiers terrified her in advance. She could endure the troubled times through which they were passing only in the familiar calm of her house. Not a sound from the outside world penetrated to her rooms, and her shattered nerves found there the tranquillity to which she was accustomed. She never read the papers, and she forbade her old friend Vassilief to bring her so much as an echo of the outside disturbances.

If her husband and her daughter were living in a villa in Finland, they could come often to see her and thus keep up a contact that was dear to her. They would find in Finland the Choupof-Karamines, who were already there, though not because they despaired of the immediate future—the lovely

Nathalie, indeed continued to affirm her faith in the peaceful development of the revolution and to admire its successive heroes with great haste; for the moment Kerenski was her god and Prince Lvof without worth—but simply for the greater convenience that Finland offered for keeping in close touch with Petrograd.

The Prince would not listen to his wife. Lydia, when consulted, received with joy the idea of passing a few months in the country. Petrograd was displeasing to her now. She was no longer amused by the revolution; she wanted to get away from it; she felt restless there and hoped that she might find repose on the estate where she had spent so many happy summers. About the tenth of May—there had been a riot on Nevski a few days before and people had seen there the but little resassuring figures of young Bolsheviks armed to the teeth—the Prince and his daughter left for Smolensk. General Vassilief had still had sufficient influence to procure for them, by obscure intrigues, a small first-class compartment in which they had a comfortable journey.

Twenty-four hours later, Paul Volynski set out for Czernowitz, where he was to join the army of General Kornilof. He had not yet been made an officer, but his request to be sent to the front had been granted.

III

A MAN ALONE

NICOLAS SAVINSKI had installed his wife Sonia and his children in a villa in Finland, about thirty miles from Petrograd. Sonia was expecting a baby; her own health and her concern for that of her children had obliged her to follow the advice of her husband and leave the city. Every Saturday he went by motor to join them, and Sonia, the moment that she saw him, questioned him with tense eagerness and strove to read in his face any anxieties that he might be seeking to conceal from her. Always he brought to her questionings an ironic and smiling serenity in which was revealed no small degree of scepticism.

"Is it a pretense?" she kept asking herself. "Does he, because of my condition, wish to spare me any distress and is he assuming a tranquillity that he can not feel?"

Savinski would relate the events of the week. Sometimes he said to his wife,

"My dear, I have passed the age of great excitements. In the Russia of today, I am like a sane man in a madhouse. I refuse, for the moment, to take my compatriots seriously. They are sick men. If they become dangerous, I shall leave them without regret.

We will live in England or elsewhere, as you like. I have a few pounds sterling. It is a sound value; it will go higher yet. Boris will make, very young, the tour of Europe to which every Russian is condemned. Then, when the crisis shall have passed, I will come back to work here, provided always that there still is a Russia and that I have any desire to work."

It was only with his son, Sonia noticed, that he spoke more seriously.

"My boy," he said to him one day, "we are entering upon an interesting period. Do not believe what people tell you, do not think that it is a question of a passing crisis and that we shall see again the Russia that I have known. New times are coming. There is a tremendous upward thrust from below toward the light. The obscure soul of the Russian people is stirring confusedly. In the society that is in preparation, my child, there will still be an aristocracy. But it will no longer be the old one, which had lost understanding of its place and of its duties. The new ruling class will create itself by talent and by action. It will have a power a thousand times greater than that of the old order which, incapable, is disappearing today. It is no longer of consequence, my darling, to know how much money I shall leave you. Possibly you will have nothing at all from me. That is of no importance. The thing that will count is what you will be, what you will know, the strength that I shall have put in you. If you have worth, you will occupy in the society of tomorrow a place higher than that which I hold

in the world of today. You must strive to be a man, Boris, that is the essential."

The boy listened to him, tense, swept away. His eyes shone with the pleasure of being talked to thus, as a being raised in some fashion above his age. He was proud of his father; he yearned to stretch every nerve to equal him.

"At the worst," continued Savinski, "we will put you in a school in England for two years."

A flush mounting to his cheeks, the boy interrupted.

"But I do not want to be whipped," he said.

The only idea that he had about an English school was that, on occasion, the master there whipped his pupils.

His father laughed.

"Very great men have been whipped. It seems strange to us, but the English, who have fine qualities of character, hold that one is not a man if he has not known how to take, when young, a good correction."

"Never," cried Boris, "I am a Russian. No one shall touch me, I will fight, I would rather die."

"Well, well," concluded Nicolas, "then it will be a French lyceum. They work more seriously than the English, and there your dear skin will run no risk of doctoral cudgelling."

In Petrograd, Nicolas Savinski took no part in public affairs. Several times the Provisional Govern-

ment asked his counsel and even his support. He gave the counsel, although he knew it to be useless, and refused to accept any post, however high. The Government seemed to him like a cork floating on troubled waters. The worthy men who composed it were without competence, without power, and, worse yet, without will. No plan guided their work.

Savinski awaited a catastrophe, but he awaited it with a disillusioned smile, with that cheerful fatalism from which no Russian can free himself. He realized that immense forces, obscure, ill-defined, uncomprehending, were in conflict, and he judged that no man at that time could master them. Like all his compatriots, he had no lack of subtle and ingenious reasonings to justify his point of view.

"We are going through a serious illness," he said, "the causes of which are lost in the night of time. Let us watch over the patient, but it is not within our power to hasten the outcome, still less to foresee what it will be. Let us wait and watch."

In his heart, however, whatever he might say and perhaps even though he would not have admitted it, Savinski was intensely interested in the events that were taking place before his eyes and strove to foresee their uncertain course. It was as if there were within him two men,—the curious spectator, watching as from the impersonal distance of the rings of Saturn the revolution that was shaking that immense empire and, on the other hand, the actor who, willing or unwilling, had a part in that

same revolution. He realized the duality of these points of view, judged them irreconcilable, but was not troubled about it.

Never had he worked so hard at his bank, preparing for the future, using to the full all his faculties to profit by the least opportunity, playing under difficult conditions a close and daring game, slipping quietly by favor of the general disorder into new affairs which, when order should be reestablished, would give him a tenfold strength and make him the leading power in the financial world of Russia. There was, moreover, in all this an unknown element, a part left to Fortune, a something hazardous that was very alluring.

The intensely hard work into which he flung himself, instead of tiring him, seemed to give him new strength. He was well and, when he came out from his office, he walked through the city with a sort of intimate joy that made him straighten his tall figure and throw out his powerful chest. He had remained young. Women still looked at him and, as he walked along, he saw lovely eyes, laughing or tender, turned toward him. To this he was not insensible, and, although he never took any advantage of it, it was pleasant to him to note that he had kept the old power that had formerly brought him so many agreeable and fugitive hours.

He thus endured better than he would have believed the separation from his wife, whom he had, nevertheless, been accustomed for fourteen years to have constantly with him. He dined usually

at a restaurant or with friends and again saw something of the world. The society of Petrograd had scattered, but rather less than was usual in the summer, for, because of the great difficulty of travelling, many people whose estates were at a distance had remained in the capital. Some, frightened by the first shots, had crossed the frontier and installed themselves in Finland; others, terrified, had reached Sweden at a single bound, carrying with them whatever they could of titles, money, and jewels, and were living luxuriously in Stockholm, selling one by one their precious stones to subsist for the few months that, in their opinion, the crisis was to last.

There remained in Petrograd, however, a nucleus of the old aristocracy and business men greatly preoccupied in saving in the tempest the foundations of their fortunes. In that world there prevailed a sort of fever, rather joyous and not feigned, a willingness to accept gaily, at least in society, the blows of fortune that fell like hail. Thus one learned in the course of a dinner and from the owner himself, who made a diverting story of it, that the peasants had pillaged the historic château of X—— and had made a bonfire of the superb eighteenth-century French books that adorned the library.

"And they accuse our peasants of obscurantism," he concluded, "when they are warming and illuminating themselves by the light itself of Voltaire and of Rousseau!"

The women, in this curious atmosphere that forced the observing of all things from an unac-

customed angle, adapted themselves with their natural flexibility to the new conditions of life that the revolution brought to them. They had always been light-hearted and, to a greater degree than in any other land, indifferent to the rules of a society regularly constituted and determined to its least details in the Occidental manner. They had been accustomed to following, without too much consideration, their caprices or their passions.

From the general upheaval, they thought that there would emerge an unknown world in which they would be still more free. Such fear as they had felt and as was still in their hearts gave them a keener taste for enjoying the pleasures of an existence which they felt to be threatened and precarious. They knew no more of those gray hours in which formerly they plunged into the depths. They played at cards madly, they danced, and, summoning their courage, they even went sometimes to pass the night at the Islands dancing to the Gypsy music. The risk of adventure, the probable encounters with marauding soldiers, the possible shots, added spice to the enjoyment of a festival formerly too banal.

Savinski looked on, listened, and mingled in these games, without becoming entangled. He lent himself, but did not give himself. He parried too direct attacks by a light pleasantry and went back to his home, where, however, the solitude of his vast apartment was beginning to weigh upon him. He realized, in lucid hours, that it was perhaps wiser in those troubled times not to remain alone with

himself and that even for a man of his temper the situation made diversion a necessity.

He saw men of political ability, and his clear-sighted eclecticism made him look for them in all parties. He gave little importance to programs and tickets. He believed in men and tried to find them around him. Thus he talked with every one and followed the course of certain ones. As a rule, he found, even among men of intelligence sometimes of a high order, only confusion, uncertainty, bewilderment.

It was in this fashion that he happened to meet André Spasski, whom a friend brought one day to see him. Spasski had just come back from the army, appalled at the progress that was being made there by an incomparable Bolshevist propaganda that simply said to the soldiers,

"You want peace? Do not fight. You want the land? Go back to the village with your gun and take it."

It was a miracle that there still remained some millions of men under the colors. The Commander-in-Chief Kornilof hoped to succeed, if they would give him the authority, in reorganizing an army that would be less numerous, it was true, but more dependable. Spasski was returning to Petrograd to support the efforts of the Commander-in-Chief there and to undertake the founding of a great newspaper, *The New Russia,* which should combat both the Bolshevist party and the socialist-revolutionary romanticism of Kerenski. He pleased Savinski, who found

in him a will to action that carried him straight at any obstacle and who, in a short time, found for him the funds necessary to launch his paper.

The intense, yet scornful curiosity of Savinski led to his meeting with some of the personalities of the Soviet. He made thus the acquaintance of Semeonof, officer of the Guards, an old friend of Spasski and a man who, from the first days of the revolution, had taken his stand with the Bolshevist party. Semeonof seemed to him one of the curious figures of the day. It astonished him to find in this agitator perfect manners and a familiarity with social usage. He was, morever, a very well informed man and had a wide knowledge of books. He amazed one by the icy coldness of his reasoning, the mathematical coordination of his arguments, by the smoothness of his logic and the prodigious ingenuity of his commentary, by the multiplicity of the viewpoints from which he looked at the situation in Russia and the unforeseen comparisons that he made between that situation and the similar crises in history, ancient or modern, by the total absence of sentimentality in his words, and, finally, by the cynicism with which he affected to treat a human question only in its political aspect. With all that, a spirit, a fertility of wit that never failed, and a certain accent of irony that gave a strange tang to his words.

To Nicolas Savinski, whose confidence he wished to gain, he said,

"Be assured, Nicolas Vladimirovitch, that we

shall not escape Bolshevism. You know the Russian soul; it is far indeed from the theories of the safe middle course dear to our friends the French. It has a madness for extremes. It is drawn to them by a force as irresistible as that of a lover. It is not afraid of anything. Communism is the most absolute of all systems. There lies for a Russian its chance of success. . . . Is it perhaps absurd, impossible of realization? Do not believe that that will turn a Russian from it. Very much to the contrary, our Russian loves to show that for him nothing is impossible.

"There is a prodigious force in this people: it has faith in itself. It wants to try what has never been tried. And how catholic it is! It embraces the world. Who was it who said that a Russian can not be happy unless he sees the whole universe sharing his joy with him? This people will not conceive of Communism as other than universal, and it will arrange signal lights on the Steppes to communicate its felicity to the planets of our solar system. Then only will it breathe freely. In Lenine it recognizes a man of its blood. Lenine never stops halfway; he goes to the limit of his thought. Nothing could please the Russian soul better. . . . What have you to offer it in exchange . . . ? When the revolution took place, the peasant understood two things: that it was to give him peace and the land. You do not know how to make either peace or war, and the land today belongs to no one. How can you expect our Russian Ivan to follow you? As for us, he under-

stands us at the first word. With him, we shall win."

"But do you believe that the Communism perfected by the socialist-democrats is possible at this time in Russia?" interrupted Savinski. "It seems to me, from what I recall of my reading of Marx, that Communism can be put into practice only in a society highly developed and industrialized to its limit. We are very far from reaching that point in Russia. An enormous majority of obscure peasants and for thirty peasants hardly one worker. Industry is in its infancy with us. We are, besides, ruined by the war. Where is that state of overproduction which should, according to your prophet, bring about a complete socialization?"

"With that, I have no concern," replied Semeonof. "I look at the situation from the political point of view. The only party that can triumph today is that which has promised peace and the land. Why did you leave that admirable program to us? I am for those who win, and that is why I entered the Bolshevist party. If Communism is impossible, well then, we will no longer be Communists, once we are in power. But we will have the power, power in Russia, a whole world of our own. . . . Do you comprehend what that means? Once we are the masters, we will work the ship. But if you want to steer a boat, you must be in that boat and hold the tiller.

"It is for that situation that I am preparing myself. And we shall have need of all the intelligences, of you, also, my dear Nicolas Vladimiro-

vitch. In a few months, it will be a matter of choosing: to be an exile or to work with us. An exile, the most terrible thing in the world. A Russian in a foreign country loses his very reason for being. The Russian is an Anteus; he has strength only when he rests his great feet on his native soil. You are too much a Russian to leave our 'land rich and great'. I tell you, Nicolas Vladimirovitch, things will go in such fashion that, when you have to choose, you will come with us rather than go to London or to Paris."

Savinski smiled. When Semeonof had taken leave of him, he lingered thinking of the face of this Bolshevik by ambition.

"That man," he said to himself, "will stop for no scruples of sentiment. Once in power, he will install a guillotine in the square of the Winter Palace. If many young men of his class share his ideas, shall we not, perhaps, see Lenine the Red Czar of Russia?"

Nevertheless, events sped on their tumultuous course in the sense predicted by Semeonof. In autumn, the arrest of General Kornilof had given new strength to the Bolshevik party. They had already the majority in the Soviet of Petrograd, and their papers announced openly the approaching coup d'état.

In the midst of this prodigious political agitation, the city remained calm. Life went on as if by machinery, every one occupied solely with his own

business and pleasure, while waiting for one knew not what, which would not be long in coming.

But the waiting was fraught with anxiety. Was the earth about to fail beneath one's feet? What would this fearful tomorrow be? Life from day to day was full of the unexpected and the terrifying. Savinski, master as he was of his thoughts, perceived at moments that he was living on his nerves and that they were being submitted to a hard trial. It was a strange alternation of moments of lassitude followed by periods of exaltation. And this mingling made of his existence a queerly agitated thing, from which boredom at least was excluded.

The Choupof-Karamines had returned to Petrograd. The lovely Nathalie was burning Kerenski whom she had previously adored. According to her, he was nothing but vanity and had arranged the revolution in order that he might sleep in the Winter Palace in the Czar's own bed. To satisfy this childish ambition, he had not hesitated to fling Russia into the abyss. Absorbed in precipitating the dictator from the throne where he had perched, she called aloud for the Bolsheviks.

"Lenine will punish that little fool as he deserves," she kept saying.

She proclaimed the most daring ideas. Russia could come through the present crisis only by a new revolution. The excess of illness would restore health. A month under Lenine would be the salvation of the country. So long as Communism remained an ideal, it would attract the whole Russian

people. Once it was applied, every one would realize that it could lead to nothing, and from the failure of Socialism they would pass finally and at a single step to the old monarchical and autocratic state which had built the greatness of Russia. Doubtless the Bolshevist period would be terrible to live through, but it was the necessary transition. . . . Many of Nathalie's friends shared her way of looking at it.

However, to assure herself an endurable life during the inevitable and precarious régime of Bolsheism, she was taking her precautions. She had a political salon. What would she not have given to receive Trotski there? But that man, unsociable, peevish, and ill-bred, a Jew besides, was unapproachable. Failing him, she took what she could find, and Savinski was only half surprised to meet there one day Semeonof, of whom there was beginning to be much talk.

He was entirely at his ease in the luxurious apartment of the Choupof-Karamines. He assumed the air of a statesman. Seated in a great armchair, leaning back, one leg crossed over the other, he quoted Machiavelli, Talleyrand, and Robespierre, Hegel and Karl Marx, and seasoned with jests the extremist theories that he offered for the consideration of his hearers. In listening to him, it all seemed a matter of purely theoretical speculations, and on that ground they followed him with interest in a sort of intoxication of ideas that permitted no glimpse of reality. One day, André Spasski—for

the lovely Nathalie had attached him, also—broke in upon the flow of his dissertation with this simple remark:

"Your revolution," he said, "will cost a good deal of blood."

"Without doubt," replied Semeonof coldly. "The first revolution, that of Kerenski, will perish because it has abolished the death penalty. One builds great things only by violence, and blood is the necessary cement of a new society."

Although they were accustomed to the audacities of Semeonof's language, a shudder shook the friends gathered in the Choupof salon. Nathalie, with a charming smile and a sparkling glance at the Bolshevist theorist, said to him,

"Happily, Leon Borissovitch, we are your friends. You will be our guide. It is you who will find for such a poor useless bee as I am, a cell in which to work for the good of all. To know that one is an active part of a vast and well-ordered whole, that is a magnificent thing. . . . But what will you do with me? What would I be good for . . . ? I should not like to wash clothes, I should wash them so badly. Nor to sew garments. . . ."

Her manner was affected, confused.

"Nathalie Ivanovna," interrupted Semeonof, "I advise you to begin tomorrow to learn typewriting and stenography."

He might have said it in a tone that would have made it pass, but he spoke curtly, in a voice cold and commanding.

The incident left an unpleasant impression on those who had witnessed it.

As Spasski and Savinski were walking away together from the Choupof-Karamine house, Savinski said to his companion, after a somewhat prolonged silence and as if in conclusion to a train of thought not formulated,

"All the same, he is a monster, your friend Semeonof."

Spasski smiled.

"He is ambitious! He has but that single passion. For the rest, he is very intelligent. He is no more a Communist than a Czarist, and he will prove to you with the same specious logic that these are two terms that are antithetical but equivalent and that one can finally equal one to the other. For the moment, his attitude is only a game, but let him find in Bolshevism the opportunity to satisfy the desire that he has to exercise the force he feels within him, let him see anywhere a door leading to greatness, and he will fling himself against it and push with all his might in that direction, looking neither to left nor to right. Then he will become redoubtable and will have us hung, you and me, if it seems useful to him. . . . He is the more dangerous because he is upright, because he can be won over neither by money, nor by women, nor by wine. He has no friend; he leads the life of an ascetic. I believe him chaste. . . . Beware of men without passions, Nicolas Vladimirovitch."

In the middle of October, Sonia Savinskaia brought into the world a son who received the name of Basile. She had a difficult confinement this time, and the doctor feared the consequences. Nicolas passed ten days at his wife's bedside, waiting for the end of the critical period. He took long walks in the woods with his children. The air was sharp; it was already freezing at night, and one felt winter near at hand.

At first, Savinski enjoyed the calm that he found in the Finnish country. It seemed a thousand leagues from Petrograd, that was yet so near. Not an echo of those tumultuous agitations reached the depths of the tranquil forests. But soon Savinski began to feel an increasing uneasiness.

"Yet," he said to himself, "I am at peace here, with my wife and my children whom I love . . ."

At that word, he paused.

"Do I really love Sonia as I love my children?" he asked himself. "There is a fine subject for reflection. Certainly I have loved her. The women that I knew before her were nothing more to me than a charming pastime, the most agreeable of diversions. Sonia was something different for me; she filled my heart. She fills it still, but not in the same way. No doubt it is the effect of habit and also—why conceal it?—of age. I am now more than forty-five. One whole part of my life is over. I have no reason to complain. I have known love without knowing its tempests. It remains for me to go on slowly toward

old age with a very dear companion and growing children. . . ."

He did not like to think of the past, and that, although he did not realize it, was the most certain proof that he was still in full strength and health. Still, today the thought that he had lived the best part of his life suddenly saddened him. He looked at the dark pines about him. Their branches shaken by the cold wind from the north, seemed to moan. The very landscape evoked the idea of death. All life was about to be extinguished for the long northern winter.

"But these forests will come to life again," cried Savinski. "The leafless birches will cover themselves with young and tender green. The wild grasses will grow once more on this barren soil; the flowers will swing in the warm breezes of May. Spring will come again for all nature, except for me. . . ."

And suddenly he was filled with a wild longing to return to Petrograd. Life there was wretched, tormenting, it tore your nerves; but it was life all the same, something troubling and powerful that swept you along so fast that sometimes you were out of breath. He shuddered at the thought of a long exile in a foreign country. To lead the luxurious existence of the great international hotels seemed to him impossible. The memory of Semeonof's prediction returned to him.

"Could he have been right?" he questioned. "When the time comes to choose, shall I prefer Russia, even under Lenine?"

IV

THE EVE OF THE CATASTROPHE

RETURNING to Petrograd at the end of October, Savinski experienced a moment of keen joy in feeling again the feverish pulse of the city. Autumn found the situation growing worse from day to day. The light dimmed in skies weighted with clouds, and hope was fading in saddened hearts. The only apparent activity was the dangerous zeal of the Bolshevist party. The tone of their papers was of extreme insolence and they announced definitely the approaching coup d'état, while Kerenski continued to pronounce his sounding phrases.

Savinski heard, indeed, of monarchist counterplots. The salons buzzed madly with them. But, to his mind, there was in them nothing but sound and fury. He even came to think, at times, that Russia would not escape a Communist régime. Moreover, was it desirable that the Bolsheviks should keep the advantageous rôle of the Opposition? If they gained the power, could they hold it? The revolution was gaining momentum continually. Nothing was stable. The Bolsheviks would share the common fate and be no more than a passing phase.

On that point, Savinski leaned to the theme of

Nathalie Choupof-Karamine, but that was merely as a matter of theoretical discussion. In actual fact, the Bolsheviks, once they were in control of the Government, would use a strong arm. On all sides one heard already that redoubtable word: the Terror. And back of that word, one saw appearing visions that filled the soul with horror. The announcement of the coming coup d'état kept every mind in suspense; one came to long for the execution and the success of it, to be freed from this long-drawn agony of waiting.

Savinski did not escape the black mood that had seized upon the city and that was spread by the conversations of every day. In spite of the nervous tension provoked by meeting with terrified people, he now found it difficult to stay alone. He thus spent much time in fruitless conversations, from which he came away only the more irritated with other people and with himself. And often he asked himself why he still remained in Petrograd, where, so far as he could see, there was nothing to keep him.

Autumn was passing, the somber autumn of the North; snow and rain alternated as the days went by, and Nicolas Savinski harbored thoughts as changeable as the weather, and as gloomy. Late one afternoon, coming from his office tired, with nerves on edge, incapable of enduring the solitude of his apartment, he decided to spend an hour at the house of Nathalie Choupof-Karamine, whom he had not seen since his return. He walked down the Nevski Prospect. The great street lamps, of which only

every other one was lighted, threw a wan light on the crowd that was always in movement on the walks. At the corner by the Hotel de l'Europe, boys were calling the newspapers; the street-cars were crowded. The passers-by seemed to be in ill humor; the air was biting and foggy, and a melting snow was making the streets slippery. Savinski thought of the villa in Finland that sheltered his wife and children. . . . There were in Europe countries far from the war, where the sun was still warm. He had a vision of Grenada on its arid and fragrant hills. And, immediately, he said to himself, "I should die of ennui!"

In Nathalie Ivanovna's drawing-room there were many people. Savinski first fell a prey to the master of the house, who, drawing him into a small side room, demanded his advice on a business matter that was preoccupying him. A Swedish group were making him offers for his iron mines in the Ural Mountains.

"Sell," Savinski told him, "but have the payment made in Stockholm. The day will come when you will be glad to have some Swedish crowns."

But Choupof believed in the rise of the ruble. For very obscure reasons, he did not wish to leave Petrograd, especially the half-famished, half-ruined Petrograd of the revolution, where he was certain of finding, at small price and with an impunity assured by the general disorder, the satisfaction of his vices.

Savinski left him and went on into the drawing-room where Nathalie reigned. She was very much

surrounded that day, and even as he entered Savinski asked himself, as he did every time that he came to her house, what vexatious idea had brought him to see this woman with whom he had nothing whatever in common. He greeted her and was already on the point of withdrawing, but Nathalie had no intention of being thus deprived of the presence of a man so notable and, with a gesture toward a chair near her, invited him to be seated. Then she turned to a girl whom Savinski did not see and said to her,

"Lydia Serguevna, bring some tea, please, for Nicolas Vladimirovitch."

A moment later, Lydia approached Savinski, a glass of tea in her hand. He looked at her and suddenly he recognized her. That tall, slender girl, so lovely, had fallen at his feet in front of the Hotel de l'Europe on the first day of the revolution. He had forgotten nothing about her, neither her grace, nor her terror, nor the childish heart that beat against his arm while he was lifting her up. He rose, took the glass in his left hand, and with his right took possession of the hand of the young girl. He bowed before her and said to her,

"We know each other, Lydia Serguevna. It was only your name that I did not know until now. Do you remember me? Now that I have found you again, I shall never leave you. Come and talk with me in some place where it is quieter."

Still holding the hand of the young girl, who offered no resistance, he drew her into a small

sitting-room nearby, where there was no one. A peace that the stir in the other rooms made doubly welcome, reigned there. The light was soft, and, for the first time that day, Savinski felt relaxed, at ease, as if he had suddenly been transported, on some magic carpet, a hundred thousand leagues from Petrograd and the revolution. He questioned Lydia as to what she had been doing since the day when she had been caught in the whirlwind of the crowd. Had the experience which she had undergone cured her of that excess of curiosity? Had she learned that a young girl like her should not take chances in such scuffles? He spoke half seriously, half in jest.

"I shall not always be there to pick you up," he said. "Or you might attach me to you as a bodyguard and go out only with me."

"I should like to," replied Lydia. "I have often thought of you since that day, and I decided that with you I should never be afraid of anything. Yet I am a terrible coward," she added, smiling.

She looked him straight in the face, her head thrown back a little, her eyes wide. She was finding again that feeling of security that she had suddenly found in his arms on the sidewalk of the Mikhailovskaia. It seemed that, by his mere presence, he put an end to uneasiness and anxiety and that he lived in an atmosphere the serenity of which he wished, because of a generosity that was his nature, to share with the few elect that he admitted to intimacy with him. She felt already in some way difficult to define, in his manner of looking at her, in the

tone in which he spoke to her, that he would be her friend, some one on whom she could rely. . . . Paul was delightful; she loved him with all her heart, but he was so young, such a child! It was she who guided him. . . .

While they talked at random and she followed the course of her own thoughts, Nicolas Savinski let his eyes rest on the fresh young face of his companion, studying it and reflecting on his own part.

"She is a true daughter of Russia," he thought, "a pure flower that no touch has soiled, a Tatiana of the village. Happy the young man who shall love her, and happier still he whom she shall love! Is there in any country in the world a young girl who looks you straighter in the eyes than a young Russian girl?"

Meanwhile, he was asking her where she had spent the summer.

"At our place in the country," replied Lydia, "near Smolensk. I wanted to see our peasants during the revolution. Ah, Nicolas Vladimirovitch, what a curious experience I had down there! I will tell you about it some day, if it interests you. I know them well, our peasants, but . . ."

At that moment, Nathalie Choupof-Karamine entered the room, followed by Leon Semeonof.

"Where are you hiding?" she said. "I thought that you had gone. Here is Leon Borissovitch who wishes to make the acquaintance of the little Princess."

She presented him to Lydia, who had drawn back

involuntarily at the sight of the pale face of Semeonof. She had recognized the look that had frozen her on Nevski. Semeonof bowed formally.

Savinski, however, drew her to one side to take leave of her.

"I shall not let you off from telling me about the peasants," he said. "I am very ill informed as to what is happening in the villages, and it is important. It is you only who will inform me. When can I see you?"

"Come to our house tomorrow," said Lydia, "before dinner. I will tell you about my summer."

Savinski went out, leaving Semeonof with the young girl.

When he left the bank the next day, after long and difficult hours there, Savinski went to the house of Prince Volynski. He knew the Prince, but rarely saw him. The servant informed him that the Prince was ill and was not receiving; his doctor was with him at that hour. He conducted Nicolas to the Princess, who was taking tea with her daughter and General Vassilief. The Princess had suffered from the solitude in which she had passed the summer. Then they had brought her husband back to her in very ill health. In stepping from a carriage, he had fallen, his weakened legs giving way, and had displaced or broken the thigh-bone. He was now completely an invalid. They had been obliged to bring him back to a surgeon in Petrograd. The return journey had been a nightmare. Twenty hours in a train without

being able to rise from his seat; ten people in the compartment, his daughter in the midst of soldiers.

Lydia smiled at her mother's vehement account. Her healthy youth had been undisturbed at these adventures and had borne the fatigues lightly. When tea was over, she took Savinski to a corner of the drawing-room and related to him her summer's experiences. It was a joy to her to talk; the life of which she was so full gave color to her story.

"I was happy," she said, "to go back to our place. It is real country with us, you know, woods and fields as far as you can see. We are two hours' drive from a little station near Smolensk. There is our house, which is very large, all of wood and old, for it was built at the end of the reign of Catherine the Great. A few hundred paces away is the steward's house, then a few buildings where my father keeps the finest of his cows. The rest are on the neighboring farms.

"We have a village about ten minutes' walk from the house, a little village of three hundred homes that is like all Russian villages. It is dirty and miserable, although the peasants with us are in comfortable circumstances and often rich. Papa has had a school built and maintains a doctor, who is a woman. She is a Jewess from Odessa, with short hair and glasses, a funny person who dresses half like a man. She often has arguments with Papa, but not with me, for we understand each other very well. In spite of her brusque manner, she is kind and takes a great deal of trouble for our peasants. It is not easy. You

do not know how ignorant and suspicious they are. When one prescribes a remedy for them, their first thought is that one is trying to poison them. But Rachel Pappe, that is her name, scolds them severely and they finally obey her. It is she who directs all their affairs.

"Already the village had changed a great deal during the war, especially in 1916. All the young men, the men under forty, had gone. There were two who were known to have been killed and ten who were prisoners in Germany. But they had given us a few Austrian prisoners. These were very good men; they lived entirely free among us, and our peasant women liked them very much. They asserted that they were better than their own husbands. It is true that they worked better, never were drunken, and did not beat the women. Their leader was called Fritz and came from Carinthia. He was a handsome man, who was very thin when he came to us and who soon put on weight. Imagine, Nicholas Vladimirovitch, he carried a love of a little muff of moleskin. He spoke German with Rachel Pappe, but in no time at all he had learned enough Russian to understand the peasant women. He was a shepherd and took wonderful care of the animals. In a little while he had charge of all the sheep in the village, and in eighteen months he did not lose a single one. Nothing like that had ever happened before. On the whole, the village, in spite of the fact that all the men were away, had been very quiet and prosperous during the war.

"This year, I found changes. In the first place, some twenty soldiers had come back; they had simply left the front and come back to their homes with their guns. They talked a vast amount and told stories from morning until far into the night; they never worked at all. There was always a group of peasants around them listening to what they had to say. It goes without saying that all the village knew that they were to have our lands. For them, the revolution meant my father's estate. But how they were to take it, how they were to divide it, and how they were to cultivate it, presented a very complicated problem, and it was upon that delicate question that the discussions began anew every day.

"Toward us, always very respectful, very gentle. It must be said that Papa had always been good to them. Still, they are afraid of him. So, always fine greetings and bowings of the whole body. Their independence they manifested in a very curious fashion. . . . How can I explain it to you . . . ? It is very difficult. . . ."

Delicately wrinkling her forehead, Lydia paused to reflect. Then, all at once, she went on.

"Do you know how they hunt vultures in the Pyrenees?" she asked.

Savinski laughed.

"No, indeed," he replied. "But what is the connection between a vulture hunt and the peasants who want the land?"

"Wait, wait," said Lydia. "You will see. The year before the war, we were in the Pyrenees in the sum-

mer, with an uncle of mine who is a great hunter. Some one suggested to him a vulture hunt in the mountains. The man who wanted to take him gave such exciting details about it that I begged my uncle to take me with him. Naturally, as you are thinking, he could not refuse me."

"I understand very well that one refuses you nothing, Lydia Serguevna," interposed Savinski.

"Well, then, we left about midnight and, before dawn, we came to a hut in a deserted place. About two hundred paces from the hut, our guide threw a dead lamb down on the rocks in full view. Then we waited, concealed in the hut. Daylight came; I was so very sleepy, but now it was time to watch. Hardly had the sun risen, when we saw a black speck in the sky, circling slowly. It was a vulture that had seen the dead lamb. In a few minutes, a second vulture joined the first and began circling with him. Then others came, until soon there were ten. Then, little by little, the circles narrowed and came nearer the earth, and finally the vultures lighted on a rock about three hundred paces from the lamb.

"From that point on, it became intensely interesting. Two or three vultures came hopping, waddling in the direction of the lamb. They looked at it from a distance, seemed to confer together, then for some reason went back to the place they had come from. And, in a few minutes, the same scene began over again. I think that it was at least an hour before they really came close to the body. Such patience, such slowness! Finally, after a time that seemed to

me interminable, a big vulture risked a blow of his beak on the belly of the lamb. From my place, I could see the little body move, and the vulture flew away again, but in a few minutes all the vultures were there and were setting upon the lamb. That was the moment that my uncle chose to fire into the flock. With a great fluttering of wings, the vultures flew away out of sight, but three of them lay dead on the ground.

"Well, you know, Nicolas Vladimirovitch, in the country this summer, our peasants made me think of those vultures. Like them, they kept drawing nearer, little by little, to our farms and our house. We kept seeing them in groups of two or three around the buildings; they would be looking at them closely and talking among themselves. If we spoke to them, they were very polite, just as in the old days. If we asked them what they were doing there, they answered,

" 'We are taking a walk, *barine,* we are just taking a walk.'

"But they came back, looked again, and talked together in low voices. In the end, all that created a feeling of uneasiness that one could not shake off. Once my father met one of them in the vestibule of the house itself. He called him and said to him,

" 'What do you want, Foma Fomitch?'

"The peasant bowed to the floor.

" 'I am looking, *barine,* I am looking,' he said in the most submissive tone.

"My father flew into a great rage—he does sometimes, you know.

"'Get out of here, you miserable wretch,' he shouted, 'or I will beat the life out of you.'

"The peasant went away very calmly, half-smiling. And the next day, we saw him again a few steps in front of the drawing-room windows, talking in low tones with other peasants. It was becoming unbearable; it made me think every time of the vultures wheeling about the dead lamb, waiting to eat it. So we came away. Papa had the finest of the books and a few rare old paintings removed to Smolensk. And now that we are no longer there, the peasants have taken possession of the house. They do not live in it, but they have taken all the furnishings and carried them to their own homes. I should so like to know who sleeps in my bed," she concluded with a smile.

Savinski passed a delightful hour with the young girl.

"I do not know how you do it," he said to her. "You tell me such sad stories, but when they pass your lips, they do not sadden me. I think that you are a little fairy, who transforms everything with a magic wand. I shall never again visualize our peasants save as the distrustful vultures of the Pyrenees."

A silence followed. Then Lydia said:

"What do you think Semeonof proposed to me yesterday? He wants to take me as his secretary, when the Bolsheviks shall come into power. He will have a high position, he asserts. He is undecided

whether it will be in the Foreign Office or the War Office. In the Foreign Office, he declares that he could not get along without me, for I speak German, English, and French. He wants me to learn to use a typewriter. I do not like him, this Semeonof; he turns me to ice, I shall not work with him. But, all the same, I shall learn typewriting. I began my lessons this morning, at a place near your bank, on the corner of Liteini and Nevski."

"If you want a position when all the world shall be obliged to work," said Savinski, "it is I who will offer you one as long as the banks remain open. But, believe me," he added, "you will have to emigrate. Russia will not be habitable for a young girl like you. We will go away together somewhere in Europe. In the meantime, if it does not bore you, if you do not fear the company of a man who might be your father, let us see each other often."

As he was taking leave of Lydia, Paul Volynski came in. He was again in the junker's uniform. He had had a disillusioning experience in the army. The regiment to which he was attached had not taken part in the offensive; the soldiers deserted in such numbers that the Colonel had sent the regiment back to Petrograd. There, not knowing what to do to make himself of use and still possessed by the idea of service, Paul had reentered the School of the Junkers, in order that he might have a military rank when order should be reestablished in Russia. He was coming to dine with his cousin, so recently re-

turned from Smolensk. That evening, as usual, Lydia had a thousand things to tell him.

"Where else," she began, "do such extraordinary things happen as happen here with us? How dull life must be everywhere else! It seems that presently we are all going to be obliged to work. That will be very amusing. I am already learning to use a typewriter. I shall earn my living, Paul; I am to have a position in the Foreign Office. It is all arranged."

Paul looked at his cousin and said to her with an incredible seriousness that sent her into a gale of laughter,

"You are a child, Lydia, you play with everything. But God knows what the future has in store for us."

"As for me, anyway, I am not afraid," announced Lydia, as soon as she had recovered. "There will be such need of 'abilities', as they say, that we, you and I, shall come out all right. See, I have already had two positions offered me, each more brilliant than the other. And, if you do not find anything, I will take you into my service. You will be the secretary of the secretary."

This prospect calmed the youthful Paul. His face regained its natural expression of good humor and serenity, and all through the evening he and Lydia played with Bolshevism, exhausted its enjoyments in advance and emptied it of its terrors.

"All will be well, so long as I never leave you," said Paul in parting.

And Lydia answered, kissing him on both cheeks, "But, of course; one does not separate a brother from his sister."

Paul did not like this reply.

PART II

V

THE GREAT SHOCK

ON the evening of November 6, Savinski was returning home some time before midnight. He had spent a few hours at the house of Nathalie Choupof-Karamine. The nervous tension was high there. Several times during the evening, disturbing news had come over the telephone: the Bolsheviks were making a display of force; their troops were mobilized; already they had taken possession of the central telegraph offices; Lenine had arrived in Petrograd; the Government could find only a battalion of women to defend the Winter Palace . . . !

These rumors, which could not be verified, overwhelmed people, and Savinski did not linger with the Choupofs. He regretted having gone there, but the truth was that he could no longer stay alone in the evening. The solitude of his apartment daunted him. Reading did not suffice to absorb him; his thoughts escaped from his book and went back to turning endlessly through the same sad and monotonous cycle. The situation of Russia was the principal theme of his somber meditations. He did not look at it objectively.

"What am I doing here?" he kept asking him-

self. "Why do I stay? The atmosphere of the revolution is truly intolerable. I must make up my mind to leave Russia."

Yet, at the same time, he felt in his heart that he could not go away. What was keeping him still in that ill-omened city? His business? It was arranged as well as it could be under such deplorable circumstances.

"I shall have enough to live on in a foreign country," he said to himself. "And, at need, since I shall take my head with me, I can again make money, as that seems to be the only thing that I am still good for. That is reason, that is wisdom! And yet, I stay here. Is it curiosity that keeps me here, where in the end I shall risk my life? That is paying a high price for indulging the desire to see with my own eyes the follies that my fellow-countrymen commit!"

But whatever the reasons that he brought up against it, he felt in his heart that causes very obscure and very secret chained him to this wretched life in Petrograd.

Savinski usually passed the evenings at his club or with friends. Most often, he was at the house of Nathalie Choupof-Karamine, where he met men of the political world, business men, and the most fashionable women in Petrograd. The circle there was narrowing little by little. Every day one learned that such a one had left suddenly and in secret for a foreign country. Nevertheless, the night before he had been there among them, jesting with good

humor about everything. Who would have supposed that he had reached the limit of his nerves and could not endure the agonies of another day? Then those who were left, smiling and with a detached air, would look at each other, each one asking himself aside,

"Who will be missing tomorrow?"

Thus the relations between the people in the group were all willingly false. But at Nathalie's house, Savinski saw every evening his little friend Lydia, who seemed to him the only sincere person there. He had formed with her a singular friendship in which was a great tenderness. It was a feeling new to him and full of an inexplicable charm. He felt that to Lydia he stood for a man very strong, master of himself, who was free from the irresolution with which the other people she knew were content. She had made for herself a belief in him as some one proud and sure, who would always be superior to the event.

"That, also, is false, like all the rest; but it is very pleasant," he thought, "that such a lovely head should harbor so favorable an opinion of me. But if that charming child could see the doubts that beset me, my real weakness, my inability to stay alone, perhaps she would change that idea quickly. . . . She believes that I am inaccessible to fear. What a mistake! As a matter of fact, I fear everything in the future, I have a cowardly imagination. If I make a fairly good appearance in the present, it is because my health is good and, also,

because I do not see danger near at hand, doubtless because of some defect in my sight. Now then, I must explain that to her the next time I see her. She is so intelligent and so keen that she will certainly understand me.

"What is going to become of her, that ravishing girl? She will marry. She will marry an imbecile, that is inevitable, and, in a few years, she will lead the only life that there is for a very beautiful, very bewitching young woman who despises her husband. . . . Whom will she choose? Her cousin Paul? He is a child. Spasski, who is paying court to her? That would be a marriage wholly in the line of the New Russia. The old Prince would never tolerate it. Or will it be one of those young secretaries of the Embassy who have lost through their foreign contacts all originality? She will be very rich, unless everything goes down in this tempest that we are in."

Lost in this train of thought, Nicolas Savinski was crossing the Troïtski Bridge. In the distance, he heard a few shots. For a long time one had been hearing shots like that in the night in Petrograd. The streets were anything but safe, and night attacks were increasingly frequent. On the whole, no one paid any attention to them. However, he kept his right hand in his pocket resting on a revolver.

"Here we are back in the times—dear to Stendhal—of the Italian republics of the Renaissance, when any one who went out at night did so at the risk of his life and went armed to the teeth. Stendhal asserts that it was the continual presence of

danger that contributed to forming the strong personalities of the Italy of that period. Will this, perhaps, prove a useful school for my contemporaries? Still I do not see that they have, up to the present time, extracted any great advantage from it. They seem to me more frightened and more neurasthenic than ever."

Just then Savinski noticed in the street, at a distance, a company of men coming toward him. As they came near, he realized that it was a squad of some sixty soldiers. They marched well lined up and in silence. Five minutes later, he met a second squad, more numerous, who were going silently through the night toward the center of Petrograd. The soldiers were marching in good order, and their measured tread sounded with a regular beat in the silence of the night. Not since the revolution had Savinski seen a company of such military aspect.

"What is this?" he pondered. "Has the Government summoned dependable troops in secret from the front, and is it going to round up the Bolsheviks tonight? That seems little enough like our dear Alexander Feodorovitch Kerenski! Can it be the coup d'état of Lenine?"

Savinski, however, went his way home, his mind entertained with this enigma, and, without seeking further the solution of it, went to bed and to sleep. The last image that passed before his eyes before he was lost in slumber, was that of Lydia seated in the Choupof drawing-room, between Spasski, who was talking to her in a manner intensely serious, and the

master of the house, who was jesting. The presence of Choupof-Karamine near the young girl was extremely displeasing to him.

The following morning, on his way to his office, Savinski met still more detachments of soldiers and of marines, guns on their shoulders, defiling with a distinctly military bearing. Arriving shortly at the bank, he learned there the surprising news that the Bolsheviks had, in the night, taken possession of the central telegraph office without meeting with the least opposition, that the Government was surrounded in the Winter Palace, and that Kerenski, cleverer than his colleagues, had fled. In simple fact, the city was in the possession of the Bolsheviks.

All the morning the telephone rang unceasingly in Savinski's office and he had not a moment to himself. The news was astonishing. The Bolsheviks had taken Petrograd without a shot. The insignificant Government had made not even a show of resistance. The regiments and the marines had gone over to the Bolsheviks. Only the soldiers of the Préobrajenski and the Simeonovski were sulking and would not come out of their barracks. It was added that they were not disturbed and were spending their time playing cards.

Lenine, who had returned to Petrograd in secret several days before, was to preside that evening with Trotski at the second Pan-Russian Congress of the Soviets and to announce there the change of government. Smolni Institute, founded by the great Catherine for the education of girls of noble birth, was

to be the seat of the new Government. About noon, it was announced—how did any one know?—that Kerenski had rejoined the Cossack troops of General Krasnof and was marching on the capital at the head of them.

Savinski had ten calls. All the people who came to see him were terrified. This time, it was no longer a matter for jesting. Every one thought that the reign of Lenine, however short it might be, would be horribly bloody. Choupof-Karamine came running to get money; fear had mottled his white face with dark patches. It seemed as if the circulation of the blood had stopped in that great, repulsive body.

"You know," he said, "that the frontier of Finland is closed. We are caught like rats in a trap. The only course left to us is to go and bow respectfully at Smolni. I am going to try to close up my business with the Swedish group, and, in the first calm moment, I shall be off to Stockholm."

He left on foot and, avoiding Nevski and following side streets, ran with all the speed of his short legs to shut himself into his apartment.

The spectacle of so many frightened people brought about a reaction in Savinski. Instead of permitting himself to be swept into the general panic, he took a calmer view of the situation.

"It was inevitable," he said to himself; "now we have only to think of how to live until it is possible to obtain a passport for some other country. It would be very astonishing if we should enter all at

once upon an era of virtue. The force of the ruble will still talk in the bureaus."

He thought of his wife, with infinite relief to know that she was safe in Finland. But how great would be her anxiety and her distress when she heard of the coup d'état of Lenine. He must absolutely find means to send her news. . . . And suddenly he started. What was his little friend Lydia doing? No doubt she was out walking through the city. He rushed to the telephone and called her,—to learn that she was out. Hardly had he replaced the receiver, when an office boy announced that a young woman was asking for him. Her name was Lydia Serguevna Volynskaia. Savinski hurried to the door.

Hesitating slightly, wrapped in furs, her cheeks flushed with cold and with confusion, Lydia entered. Her great blue eyes, of such marvellous purity, held no hint of fear, but only perplexity; yet it seemed to Savinski that her lower lip, with its delicate cleft, was trembling a little. Carried away by a feeling that it did not occur to him to repress, he put his left arm around Lydia and drew her to him. He scolded her gently, as a father scolds a beloved child.

"Little girl," he said, "what are you doing in the city today? What demon of curiosity drives you out? You are going home at once, and you are not to come out again until I give you permission."

Lydia smiled. When she arrived, she was uncertain. Now she felt that Savinski was pardoning her both for going out and for coming thus unexpect-

edly to his office in the bank. Proud of her success, she took a little tone of bravado as she answered,

"But, Nicolas Vladimirovitch, the city was never quieter. There is perfect order, no crowds, no meetings, squads of soldiers, just as there used to be in the time of the Czar. . . . And then," she added archly, "I wanted to know what you think about what is happening. All alone, I do not understand it at all. . . ."

"What I think," replied Savinski, "is that for the moment you should be at home. Do you think that revolutions are made to furnish spectacles for the curious young girls of Petrograd? I am going to take you back to your father. Perhaps we can find a cab. As for my car, the Bolsheviks have taken it from the garage. Semeonof, no doubt, is occupying it in my stead."

As he spoke, there was a knock at the door and a boy held out a sealed letter to Savinski. He opened it and considered for a moment.

"Come in here," he said, opening the door into an inner office. "Grant me two minutes and I will be with you again."

Lydia passed slowly into the room that Savinski indicated, and, closing the door after her, he sent for his new visitor,—André Spasski.

Savinski noted at once that Spasski had lost none of his coolness. He was calm as usual, and there was no trace of nervousness to be seen in his face.

"I was warned in time by telephone," he said, "and I left my apartment without a moment's delay.

The Bolsheviks do me the honor, it appears, to set a certain value on my capture. They are at my house now. But they will not catch me so easily."

"What are you going to do?" asked Savinski.

"First of all, hide. Thank God, I have more than one safe house here, and I have also an excellent passport."

He took from his pocket a crumpled paper and held out to Savinski a passport already covered with stamps and made out in the name of the engineer Paul Pavlovitch Mushine, age thirty-eight years.

"I am going to join Krasnof's Cossacks. That will not be difficult. Krasnof will have more confidence in me than in Kerenski, whom he despises. Perhaps we shall take Petrograd! Those rascals do not like to fight."

Spasski was smiling as he spoke.

"But have you money?" asked Savinski.

"I have," replied his visitor. "I fly. I am a compromising person," he added. "They must not find me with you. I will send you news of me by one of my men. He will come from the engineer Mushine. As for you, you have, I think, nothing to fear for the moment. Semeonof thinks that he will have need of you. At the worst, you have a few weeks of respite. Au revoir, Nicolas Vladimirovitch, for we shall meet again."

"May God be with you," said Savinski, accompanying him to the door.

Left alone, Savinski waited a few minutes. He looked out of the window. Spasski, with a calm

bearing, was walking in leisurely fashion down Nevski, his hands in his pockets, a cigarette in his mouth.

Lydia was impressed with the good humor of her host when he came back to her. Decidedly, she had not been mistaken in him. In critical hours, he neither groaned nor tore his hair. She felt again the sense of security that she had felt in his arms when he had picked her up six months before on the walk in front of the Hotel de l'Europe. This time, too, Savinski took her back to her home. They hailed an izvostchik who was idling along the Prospect. The weather was clear and fine; there was the usual crowd on the sidewalks. No one seemed to realize that there had been a coup d'état in the night and that the Bolsheviks had brought into power their redoubtable program of civil war and Communism. Petrograd, to be excited after six months of revolution, had to hear shots in the streets and smell powder. Now everything was quiet. Squads of soldiers were patrolling the city in perfect order. It required a great effort of the imagination to realize the importance of what had happened within a few hours. And who among those wearied and nerve-worn people was capable of such an effort?

The cab went on down Nevski. Reaching the Morskaia, Savinski and Lydia saw that the street was barred on the left side by troops around the central offices of the telephone service. The izvostchik turned to the right to pass under the majestic arch that led to the square of the Winter

Palace. But as they came up to it, junkers stopped him.

"No one is allowed here."

When Lydia recognized the junkers' uniform, she started and grew pale.

"Fortunately," she said, "my cousin has been ill since yesterday and can not go out. How could I have lived if I had known that he was here?"

Savinski reassured her.

"There will be no fighting," he said. "They never do fight. There will be parleys and everything will end peacefully. You know how these things are arranged with us."

The great square of the Winter Palace was empty. They had to turn back and drive along the Moika canal. There they met a detachment of young soldiers, mere boys, just returned from the front, their trench helmets still on their heads. They were marching without any semblance of order. As the cab stopped while they passed, Savinski asked a noncommissioned officer where they were going.

The man replied indifferently,

"We have been ordered to defend the Winter Palace, where the Government has taken refuge."

He spoke in a tired voice and without interest. Then, shrugging his shoulders, he went on his way. Savinski was astounded to see that the troops of the Revolutionary Committee, who were guarding the Pyevtcheski Bridge, gave free passage to these soldiers from the front, who crossed the great deserted

square without being even questioned and entered the central door of the Winter Palace.

He turned toward Lydia, who was smiling now.

"You are right," she said. "Would you not think that it was a spectacle, a sort of circus parade . . . ? I can not take things seriously with us. Those children in helmets and disorder, the marines watching them pass, as if it were all arranged in advance, all that seems to me lacking in grandeur, Nicolas Vladimirovitch. . . . Or is it that I am too much a little girl to understand it?" she added with that accent of sincerity and the frankness that permitted one to see so far into her heart.

"It is not a game, big little girl that you are," he replied. "It would take a mere nothing for this scene, which is absurd, to become tragic. In any case, you are going to promise me, whatever happens, to stay at home like a good child today. I will come in for a minute before dinner, to tell you the news. From now until that time, you are not to budge. Find your dolls—they can not be far away—and play with them. That is better today than running in the streets."

Lydia grew serious.

"Well then, you also," she said, "you promise me not to be imprudent and not to take needless risks. I am at ease about Paul, who is in bed. I do not want to have anxieties about you. You are not to leave your bank, and, if there is any disturbance, you are to go straight home, and to telephone to

me. . . . Ah, but, it is true, you have that terrible Troïtski Bridge to cross. That is the worst place of all. If there is fighting, then, you are to come and sleep at our house. You know that you can come there by the Millionaia."

There was in the clear voice of the young girl something urgent, serious, that touched Savinski delightfully. He checked the feeling that swept over him and replied in a jesting tone,

"You talk to me like a grandmother to her grandson, Lydia Serguevna. That makes me young again . . . But have no fear, I am a great coward and I do not intend to take any chances. At the least noise, I shall have myself shut into one of our vaults and await there the return of quiet."

He left her at the door of her house on the Palace Quay which was deserted.

Contrary to all expectation, the luncheon at the Volynski house was very gay. The Prince was feeling better, and the coup d'état, of which he had learned that morning, had put him in high good humor. The thought that the wretches who had overthrown the Emperor had, in their turn, been flung from power and hemmed in the Winter Palace, filled him with happiness.

"There is a justice, then," he said to his wife as he came to the table. "I have only one regret, and that is to know that Kerenski has fled. It must be admitted that he is clever. Every time there is a row, he disappears into a pit, like a devil. Where

was he in July, I ask you? As for the others, they are caught in the net. They will throw them into the Neva and drown them like rats. It is the beginning of the end. Next time, it will be the turn of Lenine and Trotski. Then the expiation will be complete. Meanwhile, let us drink a bottle of champagne to celebrate the great event."

He had wine brought up and insisted that Lydia drink a full glass of it. He touched glasses with General Vassilief. His hollowed eyes shone beneath their heavy brows. Sometimes a fit of coughing shook him. Then he felt sharp pains in his injured leg and breathed a curse or two. But his joy was stronger and presently he began talking again.

"See," he said to his daughter, "we must never despair of Russia. There is in the Russian soul a profound sense of justice. It can not long endure that which is wrong. How could it permit the rascals who have destroyed the Empire to remain in power? That cried aloud for vengeance. Kerenski sleeping in the bed of the Czar! The thunder of Heaven should fall upon him. I respect Lenine. He is the instrument of the wrath of God."

The General profited by one of the Prince's fits of coughing to interpose.

"But, Serge Borissovitch," he said, "we shall be chastised, we also."

"Well, my dear friend," replied the Prince with a curious accent of triumph, "if we are chastised, we have well deserved it. What have we done to support the Emperor? Nothing. Which of us has given

his life for him? Not one. We shall be scourged for our sins. And Russia will emerge from the trial greater and purer than ever. . . . Let us drink to Russia."

He drained his glass.

Lydia listened absently. The emotions that she had felt during the morning, her visit to Savinski, the drive, the champagne she had drunk, had combined to give her a strange detachment. She was living in a pleasant dream. Her mother, her father, General Vassilief, the servants, all seemed unreal; she was seeing the revolution again as she had seen it a few hours before near the square of the Winter Palace, as some fantastic parade, or rather as a masque of fairyland. . . . They were all rising from the table, and all at once she felt very tired; going up to her room, she lay down on a divan and fell asleep at once.

An hour later she was wakened by a knocking at her door. Her old nurse Katia came in bringing her a letter. In the pencilled address she recognized her cousin's writing, and her heart leaped in fear. That note, she felt it, was bringing her terrible news. She opened it. It contained but three lines:

"I am at the Winter Palace with my comrades. If I do not see you again, I am saying farewell to you. I love you. I have always loved you.

Paul."

Lydia grew very white.

"It is frightful," she thought, "he is going to die."

Swiftly she dressed to go out. Where was she going, what was she going to do? She did not know, but it was impossible to stay there without trying to do something. The calm of her room was intolerable and drove her from it. Katia tried to reassure her. Then, failing that, she said to her,

"But you can not go out, Lydotchka. Men are mad today."

When Lydia refused to listen, she made a great sign of the Cross over her and kissed her left shoulder.

In the vestibule, Lydia met one of her friends coming to see her. It was a maid-of-honor at the Court, Helene Ivanovna, who lived a quarter of an hour away from her, on the other side of the Camp of Mars, in the Mokhovaia. Helene Ivanovna was a tall, strong girl, who went through life without fever and without haste. She never seemed to feel anything and was always an hour late. Lydia had a firm friendship for her.

"It is God who sends you," she said to Helene. "I have need of you. We will go out together, shall we?"

"Why not?" said Helene placidly.

The two young girls followed the Palace Quay, which was still deserted.

Lydia led her friend along at a rapid pace. They reached the Millionaia and went on as far as the Hermitage. But the little bridge across the canal that runs along the side of the Hermitage Museum, was occupied by armed workers. Before them was

the somber red mass of the Palace. The square was empty, as it had been in the morning. The workers refused absolutely to allow the young girls to pass, and Lydia's entreaties were without avail. They turned back, went along the Moika canal, and tried to cross the barrier of the troops drawn up between the palace of the military commander and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

There, again, they met with no success. Lydia was not discouraged.

"Let us try our luck on the side of the Admiralty," she said to her friend.

Helene asked no questions. She followed Lydia on this adventurous walk as she would have accompanied her on a round of the shops to find a frock.

Near the Admiralty, the crowd was a little thicker and the revolutionary soldiers more lax. Taking advantage of a discussion—perfectly friendly, moreover—between a non-commissioned officer and one of the bystanders, the two girls passed the sentinels without being stopped. They went on swiftly toward the Winter Palace. Then, suddenly Lydia stood still and looked about her. Although she was still feeling the shock of the emotion that had driven her from her house and was indifferent to everything else, the spectacle before her eyes struck her with amazement.

All the exits from the great square of the Winter Palace were guarded by the revolutionary troops. In the square itself, however, the junkers were walking about freely, making no attempt to keep out

of sight, and were busying themselves, under the very eyes of their enemies, in preparing the defense of the Winter Palace. In some places only a few steps separated them from the Red Guards. Before the central door of the Palace were great logs of wood more than six feet long, piled up along a length of some thirty feet. It was a part of the supply of wood laid up for the winter. The junkers were working to arrange openings between these logs and setting machine-guns in place in them. How was it that the Bolshevist troops allowed them to fortify themselves in that fashion? Again the thought that it was all only a "circus parade" crossed Lydia's mind.

At that moment a detachment of junkers came out from the central door. They defiled as if on parade, their long cloaks of the color of hare's fur swinging against their legs. They were drawn up in two ranks in front of the pile of wood, and a general reviewed them and then addressed them. The young girls had drawn near, but Lydia did not hear a word of the harangue. She was looking among those two hundred young officers for Paul. Suddenly she gave an exclamation.

"There he is," she said to Helene Ivanovna.

There, indeed, in the front rank, about a third of the way down along the file, was Paul Volynski. He stood very straight, his head rigid, his chest thrown out, his eyes on the general who was speaking. He did not see his cousin. She noticed that he was very pale.

"He is ill, the poor boy," she thought.

Tears rose to her eyes. She would never have believed that she had such tenderness for that tall lad. Now she could hear the words of the general. He was ending his address in a sonorous voice, saying,

"Russia counts on you, my children!"

"In what way has Russia need of Paul?" Lydia questioned, at the height of irritation. "Where is Russia in all this? Is Russia Kerenski? Is Paul to get himself killed for Kerenski who has fled? And who is there in that Palace? Socialist ministers and bourgeois that no one ever heard of!"

At a command from an officer, the junkers reformed by fours and, with measured tread, defiled to reenter the Palace.

Lydia came near enough to touch the detachment. Paul was about to pass very near her. He looked at her and smiled with joy. His pale face lighted. Lydia took another step, as if on the point of speaking to him. But Helene, suddenly realizing what was happening, seized her just then by the arm. Lydia started at the touch. Paul almost brushed against her in passing, without taking his eyes from hers. She did not stir. When the junkers had disappeared beneath that archway of the color of blood, she said only,

"Let us go home."

They passed without difficulty through the cordon of Red soldiers, who were laughing sneeringly, and arrived in a few minutes, without Lydia's having spoken a word, at the Volynski house. Lydia went

upstairs alone and shut herself in her room. About seven o'clock, Nicolas Savinski asked for her. She sent down the reply that she had a headache and could not come down. She could not bear to see him just then. She repeated with rage the words that she had said that very morning. "A circus parade, a circus parade!" She saw herself smiling by the side of her friend and hated herself.

Night came. She refused to go down to dinner. She was indignant with them all.

"There was my father applauding Lenine. He has lost his wits, I think. It is Katia who is right: men have gone mad. Why should they kill one another? What has Paul done to those soldiers? Why are they going to shoot one another? They are Russians, all of them. There is no reason in it."

Meanwhile the hours were passing. She looked out of the window. Before her, the Neva rolled slowly its black and swollen waters. Not a sound filtered through the sealed double windows. Not a soul was to be seen on the Palace Quay. There was a silence as of the tomb. She seemed to be dwelling in a city of the dead. The peace of the sleeping capital reassured her.

"They are not fighting," she said. "Nicolas Vladimirovitch was right."

A wave of hope rose within her, bringing the color back to her pale cheeks.

"He is always right," she continued. "Yes, certainly, it is evident, there have been parleys between the troops in the Palace and the revolutionaries.

They are discussing, discussing endlessly, as they always do with us. No one wants to get himself killed; they will talk until morning and each one will go back to his own place."

She was angry with herself already for her over-excitement and for having lived through such agony over nothing. She was annoyed with Paul himself for having been the cause of these needless tortures.

"How I will take vengeance on him tomorrow, when I see him," she thought.

And for the first time, she smiled.

At that very instant, there burst forth, close by, an appalling fusillade. It was ten o'clock. The assault on the Winter Palace was beginning. Soon she heard the prolonged patter of the machine-guns. And suddenly a dull and heavy shock rattled the closed windows. A flash lighted up the black sky and showed her, on the other side of the Neva, the Fortress of Peter and Paul, crouched at the edge of the water.

"Cannon!" she said.

It seemed to her that life itself was suspended.

"What can they do, poor boys?" she thought.

The fusillade continued; sometimes she heard the louder crash of hand-grenades and, from time to time, the deep thunder of the cannon that drowned everything else. She saw the setting that had been before her eyes that afternoon and the junkers shielded behind the lines of logs. She could no longer think at all. At long intervals, all the sounds ceased. Then there would come a shot again, fol-

lowed by an irregular cracking of rifles. It went on and on. She had lost all consciousness of time. Exhausted, she flung herself down on her bed and hid her head under the plllows to shut out the sound. And, as she lay there, fatigue overcame her nerves and she fell into a deep sleep.

When she awoke, everything was still. She looked at her clock. It was three in the morning. She shuddered.

"I have been dreaming," she said to herself. "What a horrible nightmare!"

She had still strength to put out the light and went to sleep again like a child.

In the morning, Katia was beside her with her breakfast as usual. At once the memory of the night came back to her. She shuddered.

"What happened?" she asked. "You heard, in the night?"

The old nurse smiled.

"There is a message from your cousin Paul," she said. "He is safe at his school."

Lydia fell back on her pillows.

"It was a horrible nightmare," she murmured, and two great tears rolled down her cheeks.

VI

BLOODSHED

THE three days that followed the seizing of the power of the Bolsheviks were, it may be, those that put the nerves of the inhabitants of the capital to the hardest proof. The most contradictory news went from mouth to mouth and brought the deepest despair to succeed the highest hopes. Then a fresh wind would come to blow on the ashes of old hopes and stir them to new life, and when a little flame burned again, a sudden downpour would extinguish it.

The Bolsheviks, gathered in impressive session at Smolni Institute on the evening of Wednesday, November 7, had been jubilant with triumph. Not since the first days of the revolution had such accents of elation been heard. The first meeting of the second Pan-Russian Congress of the Soviets, presided over by Lenine himself, had astonished every one by its fierce and haughty joy and by the assurance that animated its leaders.

There remained, however, the task of making reality accord with the assurance of the heads of the new Government. As a matter of fact, they stood alone with the few thousands of soldiers, marines, and Red Guards who had carried them to

power. The whole machinery of the Government had stopped by a single impulse. The vast bureaucracy of the capital was on strike. Not a functionary, not a single employé of the ministry would consent to work for the commissioners of the people. The Bolsheviks had taken possession of the central telegraph offices and sent out messages through all Russia, but they had received not a single response. Russia refused to talk with them and shut itself up in a disquieting silence. The rare news that came from the interior was not favorable to them.

The inhabitants of Petrograd grew accustomed to seeing, at anchor near the Palace Bridge, the light cruiser *Aurora,* the artillery of which had aided in the taking of the Winter Palace. It always had steam up, and every one knew that it was there as a refuge for the Bolshevist leaders, should changing fortune oblige them to flee from the Petrograd of which they had just taken possession. Would one awake some morning to find Lenine, Trotski, and their tools sailing at full speed for a foreign country? On the whole, nothing seemed less stable than the power of these men who were talking so boldly.

On the other hand, however, not a single act of terror, not even the least disorder. The city was calmer than it had been in six months. Patrols everywhere, and not a single shot. Thieves and marauders were arrested. The shops were open. To every house strict and reassuring orders had been issued. Each inhabitant had been given, according to his quarter, the telephone number that he should

call in case of trouble, of theft or night search. One felt suddenly protected againt a thousand actual dangers. One breathed freely. . . .

But in the next breath, when one gave rein to the imagination or tried to look beyond appearances, one was literally paralyzed with fear at the idea, too certain for question, that one belonged thenceforth, body and soul, to men without scruples and without weakness, whose gospel preached civil war, Communism, and the abolition by violence of the old ruling classes.

In this situation was a contradiction so evident, so palpable, so well within the grasp of every mind, that one seemed to be stifling in the atmosphere it created. Ivan Choupof-Karamine said with a sigh,

"Nothing is harder to bear than uncertainty."

And, as he loved to jest, he added,

"Only the hare prefers to wait."

Nathalie's drawing-room was empty in the evening now, for people no longer ventured in the streets by night. She was receiving at five o'clock, and, by a curious effect of fear, she had more guests than ever. People could not stay in their homes. In isolation they felt their weakness, and they ran to each other, to create together the illusion of strength, forgetting their solitude and seeking to divert their thoughts by endless conversations. They came away more depressed than ever, for the sadness of the talk in these first days was beyond imagination.

By eight o'clock, every one was back in his own home, and Ivan Choupof saw with dismay the ap-

proach of a solitary evening. That loquacious man talked freely with every one in the world except his wife. Nathalie, during those three days, had tried many times to establish communication with Semeonof, but since the coup d'état he had left his lodgings without leaving an address. Doubtless he was at Smolni. But how could she reach him there? The future was as yet too uncertain for one to take the risk of being seen at Bolshevist headquarters.

Lydia, after the night that she had passed, had been slightly ill and obliged to remain in bed for a day. She had not seen Paul again, for the junkers had been ordered to their schools and could not, without risking their lives, go out in the streets in uniform. Two of them, she learned on Saturday, had been killed in the Gorokhovaia as they were patrolling the streets in an armored car. The car had broken down, and its occupants had been killed without any attempt to defend themselves. That very day, Katia left the Volynski house at twilight, carrying a large bundle. She walked to the old Mikhail Palace, where Paul was quartered, and she gave the package and a letter to the sentry at the entrance, the iron gates of which were closed. Lydia tried to telephone to her cousin. The central office answered that they did not give that number. Then she sent to Nicolas Savinski asking him to come and see her.

Savinski came at once, leaving without hesitation the business with which he was occupied. He found Lydia pale and changed. Her eyes had a seriousness

that he had never seen in them, and she spoke in a tone that had nothing of that childlike accent from which it had never before been free. She thanked him for coming so quickly, said that she wanted to talk to him, and put her question directly.

"I would like to know what you think of the situation."

Savinski looked at her face, so young and already so full of grief. He hesitated an instant, then shrugged his shoulders.

"Nothing, in truth, Lydia Serguevna."

Then, as the eyes of the young girl continued to question him, he went on in a voice without conviction,

"We must wait. No one can see clearly for the moment. Who can say what will happen tomorrow . . . ?"

He enlarged upon the theories that were agitating the city as to the precariousness of the Bolshevist power and the possibility of an advance of the Cossacks commanded by Krasnof.

Lydia stopped him and, laying her hand on his, she said to him, looking him straight in the eyes,

"I know all that, Nicolas Vladimirovitch, but what I do not know is what you think. Tell me, I beg you. I have thought so much in the last three days; it seems to me that I am no longer the little girl that you know. You are my friend, are you not? Talk to me frankly. There is only you in the world with whom I can talk."

There was in Lydia's voice something that touched

Savinski deeply. He had an intuition that she was seeking in him comfort for anguish the cause of which he did not know. What could he tell her in the uncertainty in which he was himself? He resolved to explain things to her just as he saw them, but in a tone that would take from the conversation its quality of tension, almost of tragedy.

"Lydia Serguevna," he said, "I am not a prophet. If I am mistaken, you will not hold it against me. I confess to you that I have no confidence whatever in the Cossacks of Krasnof. If they had intended to take the city, they would have taken it yesterday. We do not know their state of mind, but I wager that they are undecided, divided, that they are discussing among themselves, instead of acting, and that they are spending their time in endless bargaining. That is the Russian malady. Only the Bolsheviks seem to be exempt from it. The fashion in which they made their coup of Wednesday is truly remarkable. What progress over the days in July! They are capable of learning. Not before in the course of the revolution have we seen men who profit by experience acquired. And if you wish a conclusion . . ."

He paused, took the young girl's hands in his, and went on with a smile,

"Do you really want a conclusion, Lydia Serguevna? You know that nothing is harder for a Russian than to reach a conclusion. Our compatriots love to pile up a thousand reasons in support of thesis and antithesis. Then, when they

have dazzled you with the fertility of their wit and the inexhaustible resources of their logic, they make you their bow."

The young girl remained serious and said simply, "Well?"

"Well," resumed Nicolas Savinski, "I believe in the success of Lenine. But if you ask me what he will do with his victory, I shall tell you that I do not know, and probably, at this time, he knows no more than we. . . . I imagine that he is a man of politics as well as a fanatic. Politics are made up of ruse, ingenuity, and concessions to circumstances. One does not create an entire new social order in a day. He will be brought to maneuvering, to making shifts. But, my dear little friend," he concluded, "this is a very serious conversation, and vain enough. Before Communism reigns in Russia, Lenine may be overthrown, we may be, you and I, in England, and the Germans may have taken Petrograd and put a fine new Czar on the throne."

Lydia rose and began walking up and down the room, her hands clasped behind her back. She walked with a slow, firm step, and her face remained serious and reserved. Suddenly she came up to Savinski and said to him,

"It is not a circus parade, Nicolas Vladimirovitch. That, I have understood. I think that everything is going to pieces; I think that there will be much blood."

She paused, too deeply moved, and in a low tone, very close to Savinski, she murmured,

"It is a horror!"

There was that in Lydia's tone that made Savinski shiver. He sought to speak, but could not find the words he sought.

A long silence followed. Lydia was the first to master her emotion. She walked again across the room; then she said in a controlled voice,

"I wanted to ask you, Nicolas Vladimirovitch, if you could procure for me a passport for a young man."

At the change in her tone, Savinski felt the weight of an inexplicable oppression lifted from him.

"A passport," he said, "for a young man . . . ? It is not too easy, but, all the same, Lydia Serguevna, I believe that in a few days I can arrange it for you. I have connections, fortunately."

The face of the young girl lost for the first time its strained expression.

"I will tell you everything. It is for my cousin Paul. I love him as I would a brother. He is a child, you understand, really a child. He was at the Winter Palace the other night. I ask you, now, Paul, that boy, to risk getting himself killed by Russians! For whom? There is no sense in it. . . . He is shut up in his school. There, also, they will kill him, that is certain. . . . This is not a circus parade, Nicolas Vladimirovitch. I am happy to see that on that point you feel as I do. So then, I have worked out a plan by which he can escape. I believe they call it deserting, that is all the same to me. If it is the Bolsheviks who are masters, Paul has a right to desert.

I have sent him some civilian clothes by Katia. He will know how to find a way to go to the house of my friend Helene Ivanovna, you know her, she lives at 27 Mokhovaia. She is very dependable, she will hide him for a few days. No one will go there to look for him. . . . But you must get me a passport. I shall not be at ease until he is in Finland."

"But will he consent to go?" asked Savinski.

"He will not dare to disobey me," said Lydia.

"Very well, I will have a passport Tuesday or Wednesday," continued Savinski. "And then," he added smiling, "I think it will be time to busy myself in providing one for you. . . ."

"Oh, for me, do not think of it, Nicolas Vladimirovitch. What risk do I run?" cried the young girl in a voice which, this time, was joyous. "Once Paul is in safety, I shall be calm. . . . I will stay here a little longer, for I am curious, you know. . . ."

Nicolas Savinski found again the childlike and joyous Lydia that he loved. Now she talked without constraint, and her mouth was every moment on the verge of a smile.

"I do not know what came over me the other day," she went on, "when I knew that Paul was with the junkers in the Winter Palace. Paul had been in the war. That seemed to me quite natural. Perhaps it had no reality to me. It was too far away. . . . It is absurd, no doubt, what I am saying to you, but I think that you understand me. . . . Since the revolution, I know perfectly well that men have been

killed here in the city. I did not know them; it did not disturb me. I said, as other people say, those phrases that every one is repeating without attaching any importance to them, 'Revolutions are not made without victims'. Or, again, they talk of 'bloodshed in a great cause'. What did it mean to me, 'bloodshed'? Words, nothing more. I have passed a hundred times across the Camp of Mars near the tombs of the 'victims of the revolution'. I was never moved by it,—any more than you are moved when you enter a cemetery. And now, three days ago, I understand all at once the meaning of 'bloodshed'.

"Was it because I had seen with my own eyes the barricades that the junkers were preparing? Was it because Paul was there so near me? Was it because he was going to fight with those soldiers to whom I have so often spoken and who, also, have always seemed very near to me? Was it because it all happened two steps from here, and I heard the fusillade, and I saw the dark sky light up at each firing of the cannon . . . ? I do not know, Nicolas Vladimirovitch, but I could not bear it. . . . No doubt you think me ridiculous to give way to my impressions in that fashion. . . . Well, whatever it is, Paul must go away, that is all, and then you will see that I shall be a grown-up being, perfectly reasonable, that I shall talk like the others and that I shall say in a sedate tone, 'the victims of the revolution' and 'bloodshed'."

Savinski remained for a long time with the young girl. As he walked back to his house, there sang in his head a verse from Pushkin,

"When she speaks, one seems to hear
The murmur of a brook."

The following day, Sunday, Savinski had to leave for Finland. He took the train. He had no visa on his old passport, but no one demanded it and he was able to cross the frontier. He found his wife very anxious. Together, they decided on the immediate future. There was no question of Sonia's coming back with her children to Petrograd. Nicolas explained to his wife that it would take him about a month to arrange his business and turn over his authority to his successor and that during that time he would be in no danger, for the Bolsheviks would have to make certain of their power before putting their program into execution, that he had besides connections in the place, and that, finally, Petrograd had never been quieter than in these last days. He would come back, then, for good about the end of the year and they would leave for England. Meanwhile, he had no doubt about obtaining a visa for going and coming between Petrograd and Finland.

While he was making all these very reasonable arrangements, Savinski had the strange impression that he was far from the reality, that he was speaking the words that he ought to speak, under the cir-

cumstance, but that life was, as he said to himself even at that moment, "on another plan".

He concealed his thoughts from his wife.

Tuesday morning, when he reached Petrograd, his servant told him that he had been asked to be present at the funeral mass to be said that day in honor of the Junker Paul Volynski, killed Sunday, November 11, at the age of twenty-one years.

Savinski had only time to hurry to the church. He learned there the frightful details of the death of the young man. Sunday, while he was in Finland, the Bolsheviks had decided to make an end of the junkers and had sent troops and artillery against their barracks. No one knew exactly what had happened in the old Mikhail Palace, where Paul was shut in. All that was known was that, early Monday morning, the bodies of two or three junkers had been taken from the Moika canal into which they had been flung. Chance had willed that a servant of Prince Volynski, passing there and attracted by the crowd, had stopped and had recognized one of the bodies as that of the young Prince Paul. He had received a bullet in the head and another in the breast. As that in the head had been fired point blank, he was horribly disfigured.

VII

RECLUSION

THE days went by.

Lydia had shut herself in her house, and Savinski had not been able to see her. He had telephoned to her to ask about her health. Once she herself had answered. She was very well, but tired and, for the moment, needed to be alone. When she was herself again, she would send him word. She had ended in a slightly different tone.

"Do not be annoyed with me," she had said. "I will see you again soon. Meanwhile, for my sake, be careful. May God be with you!"

Savinski, because of his concern for the unhappy fate of his little friend, had renewed his acquaintance with Prince Serge Volynski. He was now often at the house on the Palace Quay and had formed a friendship with the pathetic old man. But he never encountered Lydia, either with her father or on the stairway or in the vestibule. Prince Serge was confined to his chair and left his room only for meals. Then two servants carried him to the dining-room, and on the way their master overwhelmed them with directions and abuse, for the slightest movement brought back the pain in his injured leg. His doctor came every day, and a masseur worked much of the

morning to keep up the circulation in his limbs. He had grown even thinner, and his eyes, still more sunken, always shone with a brilliant fire beneath the arch of the brows. His mood alternated between extreme confidence and complete discouragement. One day Savinski found him making endless plans for travelling. He was leaving for Finland and Europe; he would pass the winter in Egypt.

"I am still strong," he said, "all I need is sun, my friend, nothing but sun, the sun of Assouan, and the warm sand of the desert, the sand that one feels is warm for three feet down. How can any one get well in this somber city?"

And he pointed through the window at the masses of fog hanging over the gray waters of the Neva, at the dreary November sky, the drops freezing on the windows, the wet and shining railings and pavements, and the visible humidity of the atmosphere.

"My doctors are jackasses," he continued. "I have no broken thigh-bone,—nothing but a few strained tendons. The truth is that I am full of pains because I am so foolish as to live in this fantastic city built by a madman. But I am going to leave it, and on that subject, my dear Nicolas Vladimirovitch, you must give me advice about money to send abroad."

He entered then upon a thousand details of financial arrangements for his journey. Savinski listened with patience. He could arrange, though with great difficulty, for him to take a very considerable sum from the bank and could make it possible for him to

send to Sweden, by the diplomatic valise, a part of the Princess Helene's jewels.

At other times, he found the Prince in the depths of woe. As he was trying one day to cheer him, the Prince said to him, straightening up in his chair:

"My dear friend, I am done for. I shall never go away from here alive. My only regret is that I did not die six months ago, under the Emperor. The sight of the horrors of the revolution would have been spared me. . . . Is it living to watch thus the ruin of Russia? There are ruins of a grandeur before which one makes the sign of the Cross. But we are rotting here. It is plain to see. It smells. . . . This long time we have been rotten, but it did not show, for the surface was brilliant and concealed the deep sores beneath. Do you know what it is, this Russia of which our great men have said so many sounding stupidities? A pot filled with filth. The revolution has broken the pot."

He brandished his long poker in the air, then his feeble hand let it fall.

"Do not think," he said, "that I have any fear for my carcass. What could the Bolsheviks do to me? I am half dead. They will not force me to sweep snow in the streets. They will leave me to die in my corner, like a dog. . . . I am the only man in Petrograd who escapes them. . . . You, who are young and strong, look out for yourself. Clear out. You have something to defend. As for me, I am resolved not to stir."

A few days later, however, Savinski would find

the Prince again bending over maps or running through books of travel. He tried to turn the conversation to Lydia Serguevna and asked news of her. It was a subject that seemed not to please the Prince. He would answer shortly,

"My daughter is well, she is very well."

Then he would make haste to turn to something else. Savinski, who in his heart was torn with anxiety, would come back to the subject in devious ways. Finally, one day, the Prince decided to speak. He was in the grip of a black mood.

"Lydia," he said, "hum . . . ! That is my only care, Nicolas Vladimirovitch. What will become of her here, that child . . . ? I think of it all the time. It torments me. She ought to go away. I had arranged for her to go with the Saltykofs last week. (Savinski could not repress a start on learning this news.) Everything was arranged; she was on Mme. Saltykof's passport. . . . But, at the last moment, she refused to go. She asserts that she will not leave the city without me. It is madness. . . . I was angry; we disputed very bitterly; I was in a rage, she also; then, all at once, I wept with joy, taking her in my arms. She has a great and pure heart, my daughter. . . ."

Tears filled the eyes of the old man.

"I will tell you one thing, Nicolas Vladimirovitch. Do not think that it is from pity that Lydia stays with me, because I am sick and near my end. . . . It is something far deeper than that. It is because she loves me, just that. I might be as well as you are, she

would not leave me even so. . . . She seems to every one a gay, laughing child. Yes, she is a gay, laughing child, but that is only one side of her, the side that every one sees. I alone know how she can love. You understand, it is not in words that these things are said. . . . They are the things that one feels all at once in the depths of his being, for no reason in particular, for a look that moves one, a gesture almost insignificant. And that fills your soul with a magnificent light. . . . Just now we hardly talk together at all. Since the death of her cousin, she is going through a crisis, the poor little one. She comes two or three times a day to see me. We have never spoken a word of Paul. She is very proud; she does not want any one to pity her. And then, I do not know what there was between her and her cousin at the time that he was killed. The hearts of women are impenetrable to us, and Lydia is already a woman. . . . She has not gone out since; she has not seen any one. There is a mystery there, my friend. . . . I do not know. . . ."

He paused an instant, considered, then, looking at Savinski,

"She likes you very much, Nicolas Vladimirovitch. Perhaps she will tell you more about it. It may be that she will not tell you anything. . . . She seems to me like some one struggling with herself. The day will come when the battle will be over. Then we shall see more clearly. . . . But how will she live in this accursed city? If I am no longer here, I ask you to watch over her. My wife, who is an ex-

cellent woman, has not two clear ideas in her head. She will never be able to decide, will hesitate among a thousand projects, and will finally do nothing. If you are still here, I entrust Lydia to you. You will take her with your wife and your children to some other country."

He was becoming overwrought and his voice shook. He made an effort to regain calmness.

"We will speak of it again," he said, "we will speak of it again. . . . Would you be so kind as to put a log on the fire? I am dying of cold."

A quarter of an hour later, his mood had changed. He had drunk a little glassful from a bottle of cognac which he had had brought for Savinski. The logs, responding to a thorough poking, were lighting the room with their bright flames. As Savinski was taking his leave, the Prince said to him,

"I think you know the Spanish chargé d'affaires. You must bring him to see me some day. . . . Yes, I want to talk to him about some plans that I have in mind. I travelled in Spain long ago, before my marriage. There are admirable women in Andalusia. . . . Ah, my youth, and the narrow streets of Seville, and the odor that rises from the burning pavement when they water it . . . ! You do not know how often I think of it. Bring the Spaniard to see me, will you not?"

The chance words of the Prince had aroused an intense curiosity in Savinski. What inner drama had been going on between those two charming people

before the tragic death of the young man? From the little that he knew about them, he could not, he realized, solve that enigma. And yet he tried to pierce the shadows. The only result was that the image of Lydia, now that he was not seeing her, filled his thoughts more and more. In a moment of self-examination, he was astonished at it.

"What," he said to himself, "I am here in the midst of the most extraordinary chaos, in the whirlpool of a revolution that intends to make a clean sweep of the old society. I run daily risks; I may be imprisoned like so many others or stop a bullet at some street corner. The banks are going to be seized by the Soviet Government some fine morning. I am separated from my wife and my children; we are surrounded by visible dangers; every day one of us is arrested; I have a thousand business cares and a thousand personal preoccupations. It would seem that I ought to be completely absorbed in somber and practical thoughts. And here I am wasting more than half my time in concerning myself about a young girl who might be my daughter and trying to understand the state of her heart. . . .

"I am wasting my time . . . ? What a mistake! I am gaining time. It is a gift of the gods that has placed Lydia Serguevna before me at this terrible moment. I think of her, I see her fresh young face before me, her lovely blond hair curling in soft waves, her pure eyes, her childlike mouth. . . . Delightful images that refresh me, that take me into an ideal world far from these present horrors. . . .

But for her, I should be concerned only with weighing the political chances of the hour; I should be in constant alarm like my friends at the club; I should be the prey of black moods; my nerves would not withstand the strain and, like the others, I should become neurasthenic. Lydia, even absent, saves me."

Thus Savinski, far from driving from his mind the memory of the young girl, gave it a place increasingly large in his thoughts. He was a man of action, but he was equally a dreamer. And perhaps it is always the poet that animates the man of action. That was, moreover, one of Savinski's own theories, and he liked to say,

"A great business man is always a poet. Without imagination of wide scope, a man remains chained to the earth. One can fly away only on wings. Napoleon, the greatest practical genius of his time, was also its greatest dreamer. And who knows whether he did not owe his prodigious fortune to that something visionary in him? Even today, do we not see the party of the visionaries winning? For one Semeonof, who has a purely political mind, there are a hundred dreamers who live by dazzling visions in the clouds."

Returning to Lydia, he was constantly asking himself whether she had loved her cousin. He did not believe so. But then, why this long retirement? There was an unknown factor in that tragic history. Time, without doubt, would enlighten him regarding it. But he longed to see his little friend again and

to try to read in the depths of her eyes the secret that her father the Prince had glimpsed there without being able to interpret it.

At the end of November, Savinski went one day to the house of Nathalie Choupof-Karamine. Disturbances had developed of late in the city, and panic had succeeded that feeling of exterior security which one had at the beginning of the Bolshevist rule. An order from the military commander of the city called upon the citizens to close the main doors of their houses at six o'clock in the evening. At the carriage entrance, of which the wicket only was to remain open, the tenants and the doorkeepers were to mount guard by twos until morning. A gong placed within the court was to warn those who lived in the house in case of danger. The order was to come down armed to repel the aggressor. In this fashion, every peaceable house in Petrograd was transformed, when night came, into a fortified castle prepared for an attack.

The publication of this edict roused great alarm, for it proved that the Bolsheviks felt themselves to be incapable of assuring public order and that, once the sun had set, the city was in the power of marauding soldiers, of the redoubtable marines of Cronstadt, and of bandits without uniform. And, in actual fact, night attacks were increasing. Those daring or indifferent people who took their chances outside of their own homes after dinner, heard

shots, near or far away, echoing through the silence. Or it might be the terrible cries of some passer-by attacked. People waited at the corners of the great deserted squares to cross them five or six together. To take a long walk in the evening through the dark streets of Petrograd was extremely hazardous.

It was at that time that Savinski became conscious of the inconvenience of living on the other side of the river and of having to cross the long Troïtski Bridge to return to his house. His automobile had been seized; he had taken steps at Smolni to have it returned, but thus far without result. His apartment on the Kamenno-Ostrovski Prospect was a half-hour from the center of the city, and he could not resign himself to passing solitary evenings at home. He had, therefore, decided to give it up and to take a furnished apartment left vacant by the departure of a friend who had succeeded in getting away to a foreign country.

Though smaller than his own, this new apartment met all his needs. It was only a few steps from the Choupof-Karamines and the Volynskis, at Number 4 Aptiekarski Pereoulok, which runs from the Millionaia to the Moika canal. It was a ground-floor apartment, furnished with considerable distinction, and it opened directly from the passage leading to the court. Savinski used only the two rooms that looked out on the Pereoulok and the dining-room which opened on a great inner court shared by the house itself and an immense business building fac-

ing on the Camp of Mars. It appeared to Savinski that this double entrance might have its uses in the uncertain times in which one lived.

He announced to Nathalie Choupof-Karamine that he was becoming her neighbor. She congratulated herself. One no longer saw any one except the people who lived within a stone's throw. They must join together, form a very united little society for the dangerous days that they were going through. Perhaps in that way people might meet to pass the evenings together. Staying alone seemed to Nathalie the most terrible of the calamities let loose by the Bolshevist revolution.

"You are right," replied Savinski, "since our days in Russia are numbered, they must be lived to the full. I have opened an unlimited account for my cook. I have wood to keep me warm and I am buying several thousand rubles' worth more. Finally, I am going to have unpacked little by little the few cases of champagne that remain to me, the Rhine wines that I was saving for the wedding of my daughter, and some Château-Latour such as can no longer be had in Petrograd. I will give dinners at six o'clock, and you can be home in a single leap.

"At need, we will come to an agreement with some of the soldiers of the Préobrajenski to guard us. For you know," he added half seriously and with an air of mystery, "the Préobrajenski, which is there, two steps from you in the street, is the hope of the counter-revolution. Those good lads refused to take part in the coup d'état of November 7. They keep

Smolni from sleeping. They remain in their barracks in a manner worthy of them and look with scorn on their neighbors, the soldiers of the Pavlovtzi regiment, who are the tools of the Bolsheviks. Fortunately for me, the numbers of the Pavlovtzi grow less with every day. Already there is hardly any one in the barracks on the square in front of the Imperial Stables. I see some of them every day making off for the railroad station, bending under the weight of the things that fill their bags. They have money, for often they charter an izvostchik. If that only continues for a bit, there will be none left. Good riddance!"

A long conversation on the situation began. Nathalie was optimistic. The Bolsheviks were wearing out fast. They were too weak to carry out their program. The embassies with which she maintained close connections were full of confidence. As a matter of fact, there had been no Terror, and only a few dozen of the old high officials kept company in their prison with the young ministers of the Provisional Government. One could, then, manage to live for the few weeks of the reign of Lenine and of Trotski.

Besides, the Germans would not permit the Bolsheviks to establish themselves in power. In the state of disorganization to which both the army and the Government had fallen, they would reach Petrograd and Moscow without firing a shot. Meanwhile, by way of having two strings to her bow, she was offering hospitality to an attaché at large of the English Embassy, Lord Douglas, whose presence in their

apartment was a guarantee against night searches and the daily vexations of the Bolshevist tyrants.

Savinski restrained a smile. Lord Douglas was a young man of great and classic beauty, who had enjoyed a tremendous success in Petrograd in the year since he had come there and who was said to be the lover of the seductive Nathalie.

"There is a trick neatly played," he thought. "Doesn't she always come out on top . . . ?"

He had more than one reason for thinking as he did, for he had learned on good authority that Nathalie Choupof-Karamine had reestablished connections with Semeonof. She met him in secret, for Semeonof did not consider it politic to be seen in the Choupof drawing-room. What scheme had she on foot with that former officer of the Guards, who was now on the staff of Trotski himself at the Foreign Office? It was clear that Ivan Choupof-Karamine, although so notably compromised by his collaboration with Protopopof, was not manifesting any uneasiness and seemed even in a very happy frame of mind.

As Savinski was taking leave of his hostess, she invited him for dinner on the evening after the next.

"I shall have a few people here in the evening," she said, "near neighbors. My little friend Lydia has promised to come. Have you seen her again? This is the first time that she has gone out since the death of her cousin."

On the appointed day, Savinski went to Nathalie

Choupof-Karamine's with a pleasure that he had never felt at the thought of dining at that house. The dinner was at seven, to permit the guests to return home at an early hour. There were a dozen guests, all, moreover, living in the immediate neighborhood. Lydia was there when he arrived. He looked at her with anxiety and was surprised to find her gay, radiant with beauty and youth. He believed that he could see in her eyes the reflection of the cruel days through which she had lived; their azure seemed to him to have deepened.

"But perhaps," he said to himself, "it is I who endow her with emotions that she has never felt."

Lydia was wearing for the first time a string of pearls and a black evening frock rather deeply décolleté. She was seated in the group and he had no opportunity to talk alone with her. At the table, she was placed beside the admirable Lord Douglas, who was at the right of their hostess, while Savinski sat at her left. He noted that Lord Douglas was giving far more attention to his young neighbor than to Mme. Choupof-Karamine. Lydia accepted with pleasure the compliments of the British Antinous. After dinner, Ivan Choupof joined the two young people. It was not until nearly ten o'clock, when people were beginning to leave, that Lydia turned abruptly away from her companions and came over to Savinski.

"Are you very busy, these days, Nicolas Vladimirovitch?" she asked. "You have no idea how much I should like to see you."

Nicolas looked at her with a half-smile. He hesitated an instant before replying, then said lightly,

"I am doing, like every one else, a thousand pressing and useless things. But I would give them up gladly for you. It is a long time that I have been deprived of my little friend."

"Perhaps you would go out with me tomorrow afternoon," she said. "I want to walk for a while. If it would not inconvenience you, you might call for me after luncheon and I will give you back your liberty about four o'clock."

Savinski recalled that he had an important meeting with a bank director at two o'clock. He was an old gentleman, very tiresome and talkative. Instantly Savinski renounced that interview and accepted Lydia Serguevna's invitation. She left at once to return home by way of the court between the Volynski house and that of the Choupof-Karamines. Still very attentive, Lord Douglas accompanied her across the great court, where a few dvorniks were mounting guard in the cold November night.

As Savinski, returning to his home hardly two hundred paces away, turned into the dark and deserted street in which he lived, the sharp crack of a shot broke the silence of the night; a bullet whistled through the air not far from him and struck with a thud against a distant wall. He jumped. Then he shrugged his shoulders.

"We shall have to get used to that, too," he thought.

At his apartment, he lingered to smoke a few cigarettes in his workroom, where it was pleasantly warm. Now there was not a sound to be heard. It seemed that he was dwelling, the only living being, in a city of the dead. From the table, a portrait of his wife and his children looked up at him. They were in the peace of their villa in Finland, so near him.

"I will go to see them next week," he thought. "And I must see about getting some visas for England. How fortunate that Sonia has that little baby with her! That keeps her from worrying over me."

About midnight, as he was preparing to go to bed, the telephone rang. He took up the receiver and was surprised to hear a dry and precise voice saying to him from the other end of the wire,

"This is Semeonof, of Smolni Institute. Is that you, Nicolas Vladimirovitch?"

A long conversation followed. Semeonof spoke in a perfectly natural tone, as if he had seen Savinski the night before and as if nothing had happened since they had parted. Of politics, not a word. An underlying strain of irony was perceptible in the every-day words that he was saying. He ended by saying to Savinski that he wanted to talk with him, that an interview would be of use to both of them and that perhaps Savinski would reserve a little time for him the next day, at about seven. He would send him a note during the day to arrange the meeting-place. In spite of the detached air with which this invitation was given, there was about it something

rather urgent. Savinski, who had had time for reflection during the conversation, accepted it as the most natural thing in the world.

"What can he have to propose to me?" he wondered. "Behold me coquetting with the Bolshevist Government like a vulgar Choupof. But, after all, what do I risk? I am taking a counter-insurance, that is all."

And he thought that Sonia would be delighted to know that for the days that remained for him to live in Petrograd, he would be covered by the occult protection of the Soviets. Back of that idea, also, was the thought that he could now prolong a little, without too great danger, his stay in that fantastic city. That, he did not know exactly why, seemed pleasant to him.

VIII

WALKING

TOGETHER Lydia and Savinski walked along the quays of the Neva. In front of the Summer Garden, a dead horse lay on the snow. It had been there for several days without any one troubling about taking it away. Savinski noticed that the upper part of the rump was gone. Doubtless some of the starving people had cut a little meat from the carcass to make a mediocre soup. They crossed the beautiful garden, seeing no one on the straight walks beneath the black branches of the trees. The frozen snow crunched under their feet. Then they went on along the left bank of the Fontanka canal, glistening in the pale December sun. Although it was winter, there was a pleasant warmth there and they walked slowly along the canal, where the great barges loaded with wood were ice bound until spring.

They talked but little. Yet in the few words that they had exchanged—news asked and given of Prince Serge—Savinski had felt that the intimacy between them had grown since the day, already so far away, when he had accompanied her from the bank to her home. The young girl spoke to him in a tone which gave a new meaning to the every-day

words that she said. Doubtless in the long seclusion that had followed her cousin's death, the feelings of friendship and confidence that she had for Savinski, had developed and had found their way deeper in her heart. Merely from the way that she looked at him, Savinski understood that they had both come to some higher and purer region, where the conventions of the social world had no significance. He teased her about the attention that the handsome Lord Douglas was lavishing upon her.

"He is charming," she said. "But, Nicolas Vladimirovitch, I feel him to be so far from us. . . . Are you sure that England is a part of the world in which we live, we Russians? Life is so simple for them, so unified, so superficial! How ordered everything seems to be there! To every question, there is an answer all prepared. One never has to search for it, to delve within oneself for the solution. It is there, already written, in the dictionary of social usage. . . . Here, we understand nothing about anything. Over there, they know in advance everything about all things. . . . It is restful, but it seems to me so empty! I think I should be bored to death if I had to live in England."

"Do not say that," interrupted Savinski. "Who can say that it is not in your destiny and in mine to be living a few months from now in the mists of the Thames."

The young girl grew serious.

"I shall not leave Russia, nor will you," she said,

without looking at her companion and as if talking to herself.

"Where you are, I shall be," said Savinski quickly. "You understand well that when one has once the good fortune to have a friend like you, one does not leave her. Then you do not want to go away?"

Lydia shook her head.

"I can not explain to you what I feel. . . . I detest the terrible people who are in power; we are living in times of horror. And yet I want to stay here. Russia is enduring a thousand deaths. Is that the time to leave her? It seems to me that I love her more every day. The idea of living free from cares in another country is hateful to me. I did not know that I was so much a Russian. I have just learned it. It is a very strong feeling, a feeling that hurts, but of which one would not be rid."

"I have felt it as you have, Lydia Serguevna," said Savinski in a sober voice, "but I had not so clearly realized it until you spoke. It needed you to make me understand it."

They were silent, each lost in thought. They had reached the Nevski Prospect, which they crossed and went on along the Fontanka, silent or speaking of unimportant things. From time to time, when the half-cleared snow made the walks slippery, Lydia leaned on Savinski's arm. There was in the atmosphere of that clear winter day a great peace that entered into them. But, as they came to the iron bridge, they suddenly heard cries arising from a

crowd gathered on the other bank of the canal, a little farther down, in front of the Ministry of the Interior. They saw people running along the quays and a dozen men who had gone out on the ice, forming a violently gesticulating group.

The first reaction of Savinski was to stop. At that moment in the life of Petrograd, one could be sure, whenever a crowd gathered, that the thing would end badly and that the mob, left to follow its instincts, would go to the worst extremes.

"Let us go back," he said to Lydia Serguevna.

"No, no," she cried, "what is the use?"

She hastened her steps to come near to the scene. Shouts rose from the crowd on the quay. In a momentary silence, one caught the words,

"Kill him! Give him a beating!"

The group of men on the ice swayed from left to right, and Lydia and Savinski could not see clearly what was happening. The men were advancing slowly toward a hole that had been cut in the ice by the side of a boat. Watching, they caught a glimpse of a man in the middle of the group who was struggling with all his might, showering kicks and blows at random. But the strong ruffians who grasped him by collar and waist, were dragging him toward the hole, a black space in the white ice. Overcome with horror, Lydia and Savinski stood frozen in their tracks. Sharp cries, despairing, rose in the cold air, dominating the tumult. . . . It was an appeal that had in it nothing human, a thing that tore the very soul. Then, all at once, the dark group

was beside the boat, and, in a swift glimpse, they saw the gesticulating figure go down; with heavy kicks in back and head, the men thrust it toward the hole. It disappeared and was dragged under the ice.

Savinski turned quickly to the young girl. She was so white that he feared she was fainting. She took one step and swayed. Slipping an arm about her waist, he pressed her to him, and he felt the whole weight of her body against his own. She had almost lost consciousness.

"Lydia Serguevna," he said, "come back! I beg you. . . . Make an effort! Poor child, I am so sorry! It distresses me so, Lydia Serguevna. . . ! It is just as I was telling you, we can not stay here. . . ."

Already the young girl was recovering.

"I ask your pardon," she said. "What weakness. . . ! Let us go, but give me your arm."

Turning back, they saw an izvostchik near. Savinski put Lydia in the cab and kept his arm about her.

Lydia questioned the old driver.

"What happened?" she asked.

The old man shrugged his shoulders and blinked his eyes.

"It was a thief that they had caught. He was stealing flour in a shop. So the people drowned him. . . ."

He was silent a moment and added,

"People are like that, now."

He whipped up his horse, which started off at an easy trot.

"People are like that," repeated Lydia. "What is a man's life worth today, Nicolas Vladimirovitch? I have thought so much about it, and I thought that I understood. Yes, I thought that now nothing could affect me, that I was ready for anything. . . . And see how that stupid scene upset me. . . . It was horrible!"

Then, after a moment, she went on in a voice of touching sweetness, turning to her companion,

"You will not want to go out with me again, Nicolas Vladimirovitch, with a girl who all but faints in the street. . . . And yet, if you knew how I need you! It seems to me that you are the only man really vital and noble here in Petrograd. Do not abandon me. . . ."

Savinski, touched to the depths of his soul, drew her closer to him.

"I have already told you, little girl, I will never abandon you. You can depend on me. . . ."

Then, with a change of tone, he added,

"But do not think that I am so strong. I am only a man like the others, the prey of all the emotions, good one day, bad the next. It is I who have need of you, dear little girl. . . . It is you who give me strength. . . . At all events, let us have whatever benefits there are in the revolution, let us see each other every day."

Twilight was already upon them, the swift twilight of December days, which, from before four

o'clock, spreads dusk over the city. The sledge plunged into the hollows and mounted upon the ridges of drifted snow that no public service now cleared away. The jolting of the conveyance shook the two within it, and at times, when Lydia was thrown against him, Savinski thought that he could feel beating, close to his old heart of a disillusioned man, the strong and virgin heart of the young girl.

IX

A SUPPER

WHEN he went home, Savinski had forgotten everything in the world but Lydia. Neither the revolution, nor his business, nor his family existed for him at that moment. They had vanished like morning mist blown by the fresh wind. He was living under a sky as deeply blue as the eyes of the young girl; a light that seemed to have come to the world for the first time, enveloped all things, giving them an unknown charm. It was the radiant dawn, to be followed by a day yet more beautiful, which they would live together. He tried to recall the least words that he had heard during that long walk. She must have been overwhelmed by the tragic scene they had witnessed, to say to him in that voice which he still felt vibrating in him with its accent of pathos,

"Do not abandon me!"

No, certainly, he would not leave her. He would be her friend of every day, the one on whom she could rely. Could a man of any feeling leave alone in that tempest a being so charming and so vulnerable? Who was there near her? An infirm father who never left his invalid's chair; a mother who lived in a narrow circle of futile thoughts and in-

cessantly changing projects, incapable, moreover—like her everlasting friend General Vassilief—of understanding the first thing about the disastrously changing situation in which she found herself; a woman who, for lack of the ability to act, would drag her family without a thought to the worst catastrophes.

"With my help," he thought, "Lydia will pass without danger through the few months of the Bolshevist madness. It is only a matter of gaining time. Besides, at the first serious menace, we will cross the frontier. . . ."

It was at this point in his reflections that he reached his house, where he was promptly brought back to reality. His valet, Vania, who had been for ten years in his service, came to meet him with a letter in his hand. Before presenting it to him, however, the man said with evident embarrassment that he had received bad news from his relatives in the government of Nijni Novgorod and that he should have to go to them. He had found, he added, to take his place with his gentleman, who doubtless would not be long now in Petrograd himself, a very dependable maid whose masters had left Russia.

"And when are you going?" said Savinski, who had understood at once that nothing would keep Vania in the city.

"Tomorrow morning, *barine,*" murmured the servant.

"Very well," said Savinski, "you are right to leave

Petrograd. And the cook, is he still to be with me?"

"He is staying," said Vania, "he has nowhere to go, that one. He belongs here."

Savinski took the letter.

"He is afraid," he reflected, "he is afraid like all the world, like me, too. And he is running away. . . . But I, I shall not go yet."

And the Fontanka glistening in the sun, its old painted houses, the barges in the frozen canal, and the lifeless trees in the Summer Garden passed before his eyes.

The letter had but a single line,

"At seven, Restaurant Donon, ask for the room reserved by Rodionof."

It was signed, "S."

Savinski found Semeonof in fine form. The assistant director of Foreign Affairs had ordered a repast worthy of the old days of Petrograd in its elegance and in the choice of dishes. In honor of his guest and in spite of the express prohibition against drinking, vodka was served and also a bottle of Bordeaux. Savinski thought to himself that being in power had the same effect on the Bolsheviks as on the men of the old régime; this first impression put him in good humor and gave him a feeling that there was at least one side by which one might gain a hold over the adamantine Semeonof. In the course of the repast, however, he noticed that Semeonof did not touch the vodka and that he barely moistened

his lips in a glass of water faintly tinged with wine. It was for him, Savinski, that the vodka and the wine had been ordered. He suspected in this a certain calculation on Semeonof's part and was on his guard.

Their conversation began with personal questions. The officer made inquiries concerning the health of their common friends. Savinski, whose attention was on the alert, noted that he did not ask news of the Choupof-Karamines, and that fact confirmed his belief in the exactitude of the information he had received concerning the secret relations that had been established between this militant Bolshevik and the lovely Nathalie. He was surprised, on the other hand, to perceive Semeonof's interest in Lydia Serguevna.

Savinski told him that she had been ill in consequence of the death of her cousin, "killed under tragic circumstances," he added plainly, looking straight at his companion. Semeonof made a gesture as if to push away something annoying but insignificant, and said in his cold voice that hammered on Savinski's nerves,

"Let her know that whenever she wishes to serve the State, I will find her employment worthy of her and of her rare faculties, with me at the Foreign Office. We are overwhelmed with work. Besides, in the new Russia, no one will be able to live in idleness."

He paused an instant and went on,

"And you, too, my dear Nicolas Vladimirovitch, and it is on that matter that I have asked you to come here."

He leaned back on the divan where he was sitting, crossed his arms on his breast in a gesture usual with him, and, looking Savinski straight in the eyes, showed him the situation as he saw it.

Savinski remarked with pleasure that Semeonof avoided all suspicion of the oratory of the demagogue and talked to him as to an intelligent man and not to a popular audience. There was no reference to "the abject tyranny of the Czar", "the corrupt autocracy", the "long sufferings of the people", nor the "abominable war", nor, on the other hand, to the triumph of the proletariat, for which Semeonof seemed to care little, as far as the proletariat went. It was evident that the proletariat interested him only in so far as it offered a point of support, the lever necessary to control Russia, but that for him, as for Lenine and Trotski, the possession of power was the essential thing.

It seemed to Savinski, in this first interview, that it was a new autocracy that was mounting the old throne of the Czars, and the thought was an agreeable one, for while it is impossible to argue with a rough, enraged, and envious mob, it remains possible to talk things over with a few intelligent and all-powerful men, however far their ideas may be from your own. To Semeonof's mind, it was evident that the Bolsheviks would hold the power. They were going to make peace with Germany.

"Make no mistake about it," he said, "peace is going to be concluded; it will be a bad peace, of course. . . . But a bad peace is better than the best of wars. And, when peace has come, we will take our revenge. . . . But, Nicolas Vladimirovitch, we are young and inexperienced in business. On the question of principles, there is no hesitation in the Government. The system is complete and perfect. But in the mechanism of business, we lack specialists. . . . We are going to have to discuss economic and financial questions with the German experts. The Government anticipates that you will accept the post of technical counsellor at Brest-Litovsk, which in no way implies, moreover, that you share our political and social ideas."

Resolved as he was to be astonished at nothing, Savinski could not restrain a start. The handful of men who had seized the power by force, that little band of exiles and of Jews, seemed to him to have lost in their long sojourn abroad at least the sense of fine distinctions. What, they had the avowed intention of destroying the old society root and branch, of smashing irretrievably its very principles, and here at the first difficulty, they were appealing for help to him, who was nothing less than one of the essential supports of that order against which they were raging . . . !

It was, however, of great importance to Savinski to retain this connection with Semeonof and the government at Smolni, and he amused himself by giving to this very direct proposition, the longest,

most involved, and most ambiguous of replies. The substance of that reply was, with a thousand reserves, that if Savinski felt himself unqualified to speak in the name of the government of the people and of the dictatorship of the proletariat, he felt with equal force that, as a Russian citizen, he had no right to refuse a technical counsel to the men who would be charged with carrying on difficult economic negotiations with the Germans. He was therefore at their service, if they wished to come and see him. It would be preferable that all this should take place at the Bank of the North. For Savinski to go to Smolni could not fail to arouse curiosity and to provoke comments which would be agreeable neither to the heads of the Government nor to Savinski himself. Semeonof must have understood that, since he had given him a secret rendezvous within the four walls without ears of a private room.

Semeonof did not seem satisfied with this reply, but, in view of Savinski's firmness, he did not insist further, and the conversation turned to more technical matters.

As he was leaving, however, Savinski could not resist saying to him, point-blank,

"What are your chances of lasting, Leon Borissovitch?"

Semeonof answered,

"In the calculation of probabilities, be sure, Nicolas Vladimirovitch, that we place all the chances in our favor. You have heard what Lenine said in one of his recent speeches: 'Comrades, let us work for

principles, but let us not forget the bayonets'. Remember," he said in a voice in which there was a threat, "that the Terror is on our program. We have not yet applied it. But give us time, and every one will understand soon that Russia has no choice and must submit. . . ."

Semeonof's eyes of steel had a sharper fire. Savinski received the clear impression that if this former officer were charged with the duties of agent against counter-revolution, no one would find the way to his heart and any appeal to pity would leave him untouched. A calm and implacable will would be at the service of an intelligence that was the coldest, the clearest, and the most limited to be found in the world.

"And you will be Robespierre, the incorruptible," he said to Semeonof with a smile.

Semeonof shrugged his shoulders.

"If necessary," he said coldly.

As they were about to go, Semeonof held out his hand to Nicolas Vladimiovitch, with the parting words,

"You are going to be a financier without a charge. I think that it is tomorrow morning that we are to take over the banks."

He paused to give his companion time to take in the full sense of the words that he had just said to him in his coldest voice. Then he added carelessly,

"Personally, you have nothing to fear. We have need of your talents."

"In that case," said Savinski, who judged all pro-

test futile, "you will be wise, Leon Borissovitch, to guarantee the safety of my return to the Aptiekarski Pereoulok. Without reproach, you do leave us in darkness, and the Moika is a lair of cut-throats."

"I have an automobile," answered Savinski, now in good humor, "I will set you down there. I run the same risks as you; but I have no time to think about them. In these times, my friend, both my life and yours are endangered. . . . What does it matter? At all events, there will be no search at your house for the present. If any one wants to enter in the night, do not open the door, but telephone to Number 4–15. They will send a patrol at once."

Semeonof's car was driven by a soldier in uniform. He drove along the Millionaia, and, as they came to the Choupof-Karamine house, Savinski saw lights there and decided to stop.

"You will present my respectful greetings to the beautiful Nathalie," said Semeonof, bowing.

The news that Savinski had just heard did not disturb him. He had very accurate information as to what was going on at Smolni, and he had been warned several days before that the seizure of the banks was imminent. He had, therefore, already taken his precautions. When he saw the lights at the Choupof-Karamine house, he thought at once that Lydia might be there and that he would see her and ask her to take him to her father, whom he wished to spare the excitement of trying news on the following morning.

Lydia was, indeed, in Nathalie's drawing-room.

She rose as Savinski entered and came quickly to meet him, saying,

"I did not know that I was to have the pleasure of seeing you again, *mon ami.*"

"It is for you only that I have come here," said Savinski softly, keeping her hand in both his own. "You will take me in a few minutes to your father. I have something to tell him."

Nathalie and Lord Douglas were looking at them.

Savinski joined the circle. The emotions of the day, the walk along the Fontanka, the unexpected and curious dinner at Donon's, the fencing match with Semeonof, in which they seemed at times to be fencing without buttons on the foils, and finally Lydia's greeting, had roused in him a pleasant exhilaration. It made life seem to him a fairy masque of changing scenes, sometimes somber and tragic and again presenting enchanting views, over landscapes where the shadows of evening were beginning to fall and an unseen flute in some far orchard was breathing a languorous call to love.

"What has happened to you tonight, Nicolas Vladimirovitch?" Nathalie called to him. "You seem to have grown ten years younger. Are you bringing us good news?"

"Great news, at all events," replied Savinski. "Good? That depends on what you mean by good. The news of something that may hasten the fall of the Soviets, would you call that good news?"

"But, beyond doubt," said Nathalie, who was

leading the dialogue for a mute and attentive chorus.

"Well then, rejoice," said Savinski. "All the banks in Petrograd will be seized tomorrow by the Bolsheviks."

"But what does that mean?" said a rather stout lady. "What change will that make in business?"

"Oh, insignificant," returned Savinski, "that is, if you regard it from the pont of view of eternity, as the philosophers say. You will not be able to draw any more money on your checking accounts, and your safe-deposit boxes will be confiscated."

At that point, Choupof-Karamine rolled on his short legs up to Savinski.

"Stop joking, old dear," he exclaimed in a biting voice. "Is this news accurate? But do you know that it means ruin for all of us? The money on our checking accounts . . . ! That is a plain theft."

"It is a political measure conforming exactly to the declarations of the Soviet Government," said Savinski. "It is certain that we are ruined. . . . But I consider that our ruin will bring about that of the State and that in this way the seizure of the banks will precipitate the fall of the Bolsheviks."

"But when?" broke in Nathalie, who seemed to have lost all her calmness. "When . . . ? The safe-deposit boxes, too! Do not torture us! Think of it. . . . You are odious with your irony."

She said nothing more, but, from the tone in which she had spoken, one divined that she had more interest in the contents of her safe-deposit box than in the amounts credited to her bank-account. Great

excitement prevailed in the drawing-room. Every one understood now that with the seizure of the banks, the old society which, up to that time, in spite of its partial ruin, had continued to exist in its essential lines, was crumbling at a single blow.

Lord Douglas remained impassive. In the mingled fire of exclamations and questions, he bent toward Lydia, beside whom he was seated.

"Then you are ruined, dear little thing," he said. "That is very interesting."

Lydia shrugged her shoulders. Her face brightened.

"That is of no importance," she said.

Taking advantage of the tumult aroused by the news that he had flung into the circle, Savinski turned to his friend and asked her to take him to her father. She rose at once and took leave of Nathalie. Savinski followed her. In a moment they were in the great court that separated the two houses. A group of dvorniks were warming themselves before a fire of wood which they had lighted near one of the doors, and the flames threw their flickering light through the night on the heaps of snow, the even piles of wood stacked up for the winter, the bare walls of the houses, and the half-defined forms of the dvorniks who, wrapped in their sheepskin coats, were stamping their feet in slow measure on the frozen snow.

Coming out from the drawing-rooms of Nathalie Choupof-Karamine, with their luxury of the old days, Savinski thus found again a stage-setting of

the revolution before his eyes. This night watch against dangers unseen but real, reminded him that that great city, which seemed to be sleeping the sleep of death beneath the winter's cold, was full of enemies against whom one must defend oneself. The only effect of this realization was to give him a keener zest for life and to make him feel more strongly the bonds of affection that bound him to the young girl who was walking with her light grace before him. They entered a service door and passed along the corridors until they came to an immense and poorly heated room, Prince Serge's gallery of paintings. Lydia lighted an electric lamp and said,

"Will you wait for me with Mamma, or here? I must tell Papa that you have come."

Savinski had no desire to see the Princess Helene and her old friend Vassilief, whose childish chatter irritated him. He remained in the painting gallery, dimly lighted by the lamp burning on the table. Directly in front of him, a large landscape by Poussin spread its masses of dark verdure, set in a gold frame. In it he could make out Eurydice fleeing along the edge of a stream. Farther away, the svelt figure of an Apollo Sauroctonos stood out, white in the shadow that filled the end of the gallery. In the quiet of that great room, where masterpieces evoked civilizations long vanished and the nobility of lives lived under fairer skies, along the coasts of seas sounding on rocks burned with the sun, the spirit of Savinski was borne far from Petrograd, toward an Arcady to which Lydia accompanied him.

At that moment, the young girl returned.

"Papa is waiting for you," she said. "He is not well this evening, but he is very anxious to see you."

Savinski followed her. As they came to the door into the hall, he laid a hand on her arm and stopped her.

She showed no surprise and turned toward him, a smile in her eyes and on her parted lips.

Moments passed, and they did not speak.

Savinski bent over her,

"I just wanted to tell you," he said, "that I am very happy."

The young girl made no reply, but her fingers tightened on his hand as she conducted him to Prince Serge.

X

THE DOUBTFUL CROSSROADS

SAVINSKI found Semeonof a source of exasperation. Even more than the cynicism of the proposals he had made to him, the tone in which he had demanded his collaboration irritated him. Had he been right in consenting to give technical advice to the masters of the hour? Was he not thus taking a part, however small it might be, of responsibility in the Bolshevist enterprise that was leading Russia to the abyss?

What would be said of him if people knew that he had entered into secret relations with the Terrorist dictators? Their reign would be of short duration. He would have only the shame of having yielded to their demands. And why had he done it, besides? Why this obstinate determination not to leave Petrograd? Nothing was easier for him than to go to Finland. And once there, he could find ways to reach Sweden or England with his family. He found no reply to these questions, to which he returned continually.

"Would I dare to tell Lydia Serguevna about it," he reflected one day. "What would she think of it, she who is all purity?"

To conceal anything from this friend of his was

already disagreeable to him. She had formed so high an idea of him, that she forced him to rise above himself. Curiously enough, she rarely spoke of the Bolsheviks. Never had he surprised her into a violent word against Lenine or Trotski. She seemed as if living in a city ravaged by a terrible pestilence, which one seeks to escape, but for which one does not blame men.

The Bank of the North, like all other banks in Petrograd, had been nationalized. Red Guards were stationed there, and a commissioner sat in the director's office. Every day Savinski saw a crowd of people waiting at its doors to have personal confirmation of their ruin. The bank would give only a hundred and fifty rubles a month on the amounts on deposit. The holders of safe-deposit boxes were called up in succession. The jewels and the gold in their boxes were confiscated. An incredible disorder prevailed in that bank where, in other days, everything had been done with method and regularity.

This spectacle irritated Savinski. So he spent only an hour in the morning at the bank, an hour wasted in extraordinary and futile discussions with the Government agent. Once he saw there a spectacled Jew, who had come straight from Smolni Institute with a line of introduction from Semeonof. This representative of the Government asked him various questions concerning the economic and financial negotiations with Germany. Savinski judged him to be completely ignorant of business, but intelligent and eager to learn. The thought that a man wholly new

to the business, untrained, wholly unacquainted with financial life, was to discuss the greatest questions with the German leaders, had about it something laughable. . . . His interview with Savinski, however maintained a tone of conventional courtesy.

It was in the course of that week, when his nerves were taut and he was looking for a quarrel with himself, that Savinski had at his apartment a visit from a soldier with a rather distinguished face. This soldier insisted on seeing him alone, made sure that the door was fully closed behind him, and then said in a low voice,

"I have been sent by the engineer Mushine. He wants to see you. He is at Number 58 on the Moika, on the second floor. Come after sunset and ask for the Kartachef apartment. It will be I who will open the door for you."

Savinski's first thought was one of pleasure.

"After so many rascals of both parties, I am at last going to see the face of an honest man," he said to himself. "There is one Russian who knows nothing of compromises."

He thought of the wandering life of Spasski in the month and more since he had taken leave of him. He had heard nothing about it. Where had the man disappeared in the tempest? The only thing that Savinski had learned about him was that he was still alive, for the Bolsheviks, who feared his energy and saw in him one of their most dangerous enemies, had recently printed in their papers the announcement that a hundred thousand rubles

would be paid to any one who should deliver Spasski, dead or alive, into their hands.

Savinski looked at the soldier who stood waiting his reply.

"And here is another honest man," he reflected. "There still are some, then. A hundred thousand rubles, that would be a fortune to him."

He shook his hand and told him to tell the "engineer Mushine" that he would be with him at six o'clock. When he was alone again, the thought crossed his mind,

"This is a rather hazardous enterprise that I am launched on. Suppose the ingenious Semeonof should have me followed? What would be the end of that? Prison or a summary execution."

The thought that Semeonof might be having him watched, amused him.

"If he is concerning himself with me," he thought, "he must know that every day I see Lydia Serguevna, in whom he is so much interested."

Soon, however, he thought only of the pleasure of seeing Spasski again.

At nightfall, he accompanied Lydia, with whom he had been walking for an hour along the Neva, back to her home. He was burning to tell her that he was going to see her friend Spasski, but he judged it wiser to say nothing. He saw no one who seemed interested in them, but as a measure of precaution, he went with her into the house of Prince Serge and lingered to take tea and, coming out, he crossed the court and went on to the Millionaia by

way of the Choupof-Karamine house. In a few minutes he arrived at the house indicated on the Moika.

The vestibule on the side of the canal was poorly lighted. He did not meet the porter and mounted without being questioned to the second floor. A minute later, he was with Spasski in a small room where a bed was spread on a divan.

Spasski was wearing the uniform of a common soldier.

"It is the best disguise in Russia today," he said with a smile, seeing the astonished expression of his visitor. "I am one of the three or four million soldiers who are at present wandering about the country. And here is my certificate."

He held out to Savinski a greasy certificate in the name of Karpof, Ivan Fomitch, of the government of Orel.

"You understand perfectly, dear friend, that I do not do the Bolsheviks the honor of being disturbed about their police. . . . I escaped from the Okhrana of the Czar. These people today are mere children compared with the police of the old days."

Spasski's orderly brought in the tea.

As with Semeonof, the conversation began with personal questions, and Savinski noted that the name of Lydia Serguevna was the first one mentioned. Spasski asked at once if she had remained in Petrograd and spoke of her in terms that touched Savinski.

"I should like so much to see her," he said, "for she is a charming girl and hides beneath her shyness a character upright and proud. I have confidence in her. The women are of more worth than the men in our country, Nicolas Vladimirovitch. But I am afraid that I should be making her run an unnecessary risk. . . . For this time, it is best to give it up. I shall see her only if it is necessary. Perhaps you would say to her that I have not forgotten her, that I think of her. . . ."

"Certainly I will tell her," replied Savinski. "I love her, too, as if she were my daughter. We often speak of you. In spite of the present horrors, she is still full of faith in Russia. Her youthful enthusiasm is precious to me; it cheers me in many hours when I would like to abandon everything and flee. We are living in bad times, André Ivanovitch; one becomes a coward. . . ."

He paused on that word, which seemed to him to fill the room. He considered a moment, looked at Spasski, who in his astonishment did not take his eyes from him, and all at once he decided to tell his friend of the interview with Semeonof and the way in which he found himself involved.

Much to his surprise, Spasski, instead of raising objections, approved of his keeping in contact with the Government. Doubtless, he should avoid compromising himself publicly and thus giving to the Terrorist dictators the moral prestige of so notable a recruit to their ranks. With this reservation, how-

ever, he saw only advantages in establishing obliging relations with the leaders at Smolni.

"You see," he said, "the one mistake at the present time is to leave Russia. It is a time when all patriotic Russians should be here, when men like me should make open war against the Bolsheviks and men like you should be ready, when the day comes, to take over the direction of things. . . You can not hide under the uniform of a soldier; you must stay in Petrograd, and if, in order to live here, you have to talk an hour or two a week with the Bolsheviks, I do not see anything out of the way in that. . . . We shall need you.

"I am going to leave for the Don to find Generals Alexeief, Kornilof, and Kaledine. It is from them that help will come. . . . But we must have dependable men in Petrograd. It is to you that I shall send a part of my necessary messages. They will be brought to you by men who are entirely trustworthy and, for the most part, verbally. There is a mania for writing in Russia, and nothing is more dangerous. . . You will have letters from me only when it is absolutely necessary; you must read them with the eyes of the mind and understand on a half-word; they will never be signed; will not bear your name, and will not be in my writing, which these rogues know. You will recognize them by the fact that in the second sentence, there will be always the word 'again'.

"Now, those are our plans, but I warn you in advance that we must have money, for they have not a

kopek in the Don, and no money, no army. You must see our allies and make them understand that the only way to overthrow the Bolsheviks is to aid in building up an army of volunteers on Cossack territory."

Spasski's face was alight; he was in full action. For him, life was simple; he had a purpose toward which all his faculties were working. And that purpose was magnificent: the liberation of Russia, fallen into the most degrading slavery. What finer action could be offered to a man still young and in full confidence of his strength?

He entered into a thousand details on the manner of organizing safe and rapid communication between the Don and Petrograd. He foresaw everything, even that Savinski might be arrested or simply watched. He gave him the most meticulous directions concerning the precautions he should take to throw any spies he might see around his house, off the trail.

When he left him late in the evening, Savinski felt, in his turn, full of life and courage. And, as the face of Spasski came again before his eyes, he said to himself,

"I have seen a happy man. . . . Yes, amidst the horror of these times, he is finding, by incredible luck, the very use for his faculties. He does not know it; he does not realize it; he talks, like the rest of us, of the shame of being a Russian today, and yet he has never lived hours that were fuller or finer. . . ."

And Savinski, giving himself up to his mania for philosophizing, set out to follow eagerly a trail so rich in new thoughts and ones which seemed to him singularly alluring.

XI

FINLAND

FOR three weeks, Savinski, caught in the whirlwind of events that swept him on, had not been to see his family in Finland. He put it off from day to day, but a persistent remorse filled his soul and he could not escape from it. His wife was expecting him. She did not complain. That was not her habit. She spoke not of herself, but of the children who were growing impatient, especially Boris. She was disturbed, too, to know that her husband was exposed to a thousand dangers which her imagination, from a distance, exaggerated. She had, however, complete confidence in him, knew that he was detained by important business, and did not doubt that at the moment he should consider it possible, he would come to join them, to live with them in Finland or to go on to England.

At last, Savinski, taking advantage of a moment of calm in the tempest that was shaking the city, decided to go for two days to the other side of the frontier. He felt a little troubled in telling Lydia Serguevna of this decision. He was seeing her every day, and the intimacy that had come to be between them was such that it seemed to him that he had no right to abandon her, even for so brief a time.

He told her about it as they were walking in that garden near the Neva where the bronze statue of Peter the Great stands.

"You understand, little friend," he said, "that I shall be very anxious about you. 'What is happening in the city?' I shall ask myself every hour. 'Is everything calm? Are they firing on Nevski?' You must promise me to be very careful and not to commit any follies. Perhaps you would consent not to go out? I have reached the point of believing that you can not set foot outside your door without me."

But Lydia, in a spirited tone, resented the suggestion.

"Am I a little girl?" she said. "The city is quiet. I promise you nothing at all. Probably I shall go out with my friend Helene. As for follies, I should like very well to commit some, but it is not so easy as you fancy."

She paused an instant.

"On the whole, I should like to know what you call follies. . . . If I go to see Semeonof at Foreign Affairs, is that a folly? No, I am sure that he would receive me very well and show me a perfect courtesy. . . . Shall I go to tea with the admirable Lord Douglas, who has been inviting me for a long time? Oh, not alone, dear Nicolas Vladimirovitch, always with my friend. Follies in your eyes, but in mine things very reasonable and tiresome. . . . I am going to tell you something that I have been thinking about for a long time, Nicolas Vladimirovitch. We are now in full revolution. Under Keren-

ski, one might have doubts about it. You were still president of the Bank of the North. Now, you are nothing at all, and the Bolsheviks have even taken your car.

"We are all ruined. People do not perceive that yet, but it will come. . . . Little by little, our servants are leaving us. We are ill nourished; we are warm only because we have still some reserves of wood; the electric light is often lacking at the moment one needs it most. One can no longer go out at night, because one is robbed at every street corner. We do not know what will happen to us tomorrow. . . . And here we lead the same monotonous little life, without imagination, narrowed only, because people hardly see each other. It lacks grandeur, truly. . . . We are very mediocre, my dear friend. And the worst of it is that I do not see what greatness we can invent. It is desolating! At night, when I am in bed and ready to go to sleep, I search my thoughts and I say to myself, 'Behold another day of my youth that is fled. What have I done with it?' "

She spoke half-laughingly, half-seriously, but from certain accents of her voice, of which she was not completely mistress, Savinski understood that a secret chord within her was vibrating dolorously. His powerlessness to make her happy presented itself suddenly to his mind and overwhelmed him. He made no answer, and bitter thoughts rose in his heart.

They were alone in the garden dominated by the bronze horseman, whose mount pranced daringly

above their heads. A sky lead gray and low hung over the city. On one side of the square, the great palaces of the Holy Synod and of the Senate lifted their white columns and pilasters against the yellow background of their walls; on the other side, the Palace of the Admiralty spread the Imperial pomp of its architecture all the way to the quay of the Neva. A little red flag floated from the tip of its roof and seemed to insult a whole past of grandeur, order, and magnificence. Savinski had the feeling that he and Lydia were lost in an unknown and hostile country. A catastrophe threatened them. They must flee. . . . But it was too late. He shuddered.

Regaining control of himself at once, he mocked at his irrational terrors. He felt himself in full strength, and beside him was Lydia. Was not that enough to defy destiny?

As he accompanied the young girl back to her home, he was astonished at her change of mood. She was nervous, irritable. For the first time, she said rather sharp things to him. He tried in vain to call her back. When he took leave of her, not to see her again for two days, he was in despair.

The following day, having left Petrograd early in the morning, he was with his family about noon. The weather was foggy and cold; the Finnish country sad, without horizon, colorless. He found the family atmosphere that he knew, that quiet, that sense of serenity that Sonia brought into being

around her and of which he had been sensible in the already long course of the years of their marriage. With her, everything seemed a part of a certain definite ordering, the existence of which was governed by secret laws that, by their very essence, were above all discussion. There was nothing that could either astonish or surprise in the relations that existed between her, her children, and her husband. The spiritual glow that radiated from her being was like the warmth, gentle, always even, never running to extremes, comforting, penetrating everywhere, that comes from the great porcelain stoves of Russia.

Savinski was sensible of it once more; his nerves, put to hard trial by the difficult life of Petrograd, relaxed. A wave of pleasant sensations swept over him. After tea, Sonia sat down at the piano and sang in a sweet, low voice, some of the old folk songs. Savinski was holding on his knees his little daughter, who listened without stirring, one arm around her father's neck and her fresh cheek pressed against his. He did not resist the emotion that rose within him and, increasing gradually, overwhelmed him. A happiness, calm, rich, and tranquil, was there, within reach of his hand. Suddenly he asked himself passionately,

"Why am I so deeply affected by all this?"

And immediately, involuntarily, the reply rose to his lips,

"Perhaps I am no longer made for this sort of happiness!"

It seemed to him that some one he did not know had spoken within him. The shock was so sharp that tears rose to his eyes. He drew his daughter close and pressed his lips to her pure forehead. The child tightened her arm about her father's neck and kissed him. He was breathing hard, as if he had climbed a steep hill.

The dinner was very gay. Boris enlivened it with his sallies, and Savinski, in an irresistible relaxation, was entertained by his son and let himself be swept along by the youthful enthusiasm with which Boris animated the conversation. Nevertheless, several times in the course of the meal he found his wife looking long at him. Once he thought that he read in her look the hint of a surprise that was a little disturbed. But that momentary impression soon faded.

It was nearly midnight. Already the light had been turned off above the bed where Savinski was lying beside his wife. He took her in his arms and drew her to him to kiss her before going to sleep. On her cheeks he felt the warm tears.

"You are crying?" he said tenderly.

"Pardon me, it is nothing," she answered. "I have been a little overwrought these last days. The times are hard for me, too. . . . But I am happy and I love you."

She pressed against him. Her tears still flowed. She fell asleep in the arms of her husband, who caressed her gently and did not speak.

The next day, he returned to Petrograd before the dinner hour. Sonia had shown no trace of weakness in the course of the day, and she accompanied him to the station with the children. Savinski told his plans. They must wait a little; Finland was calm, although bands of deserting sailors and soldiers roamed across it. They did not, however, wander far from the railroad, and, in spite of the agitations of the Socialist party, the position of the bourgeois Government seemed to be still secure. He would watch the development of the crisis in Petrograd. If the Bolsheviks were driven from Smolni, he ought to be there. If, on the other hand, they established themselves in power, well then, it would still be possible to cross the frontier and go to another country. Meanwhile, he would try to come every week to his family and would, in any case, send them news of him by a sure way.

On the train, during the wait at Bieloostrof, and until a sledge took him from the Finland station to his house, Savinski remained under the influence of the hours passed with his wife. Once in his apartment, however, he turned quickly to the telephone and called the Volynski house. He learned with astonishment that Lydia Serguevna was not at home. He telephoned to Nathalie Choupof-Karamine. She had the grippe, was alone in the house, and was not receiving.

Where had Lydia vanished? It had already been dark for more than two hours. How did she dare to stay out so late? Perhaps she was with her friend

Helene on the Mokhovaia? She had no telephone. To come back from her house, one had to cross the dangerous solitude of the Camp of Mars. With his very eyes, he saw Lydia coming alone down the path that was bordered on one side by the canal and on the other by the piles of wood that were part of the reserve of the city. She was walking with her own light grace, careless, thinking only of not falling into the holes in the walk. And there, near the little bridge, three silent soldiers were waiting. . . .

The image was so clear before his eyes that he dashed to the foyer, caught up his coat, and, in a moment, was at the corner of the Camp of Mars. The square was empty and desolate. The north wind had risen, and the meager flame was dancing within the glass of the only street lamp that was lighted. It was intensely cold. On the other side of the square, heavy street-cars, coupled together, passed grinding on their icy rails. He walked on along the street; he waited a moment, lighted a cigarette, turned back, and decided to go home.

"This life is impossible," he caught himself saying, when he was once more in the warmth of his little apartment. He took up the telephone. This time, Lydia answered it.

"What have you been doing?" he demanded. "I am dead with anxiety."

"But I have been having a very amusing time," answered Lydia." Why make troubles for yourself. . . ? And then, I have something to tell you."

"What is it?" said Savinski, who, having barely

recovered calm, was the prey of a new and indefinable emotion.

"I will tell you tomorrow, if you care to see me. . . . But I can not go out with you. . . . I am not free. Come tomorrow at five and have tea. This evening . . . ? No, I am tired, I am going to stay with Papa, who is not well . . . Until tomorrow."

Savinski passed a miserable evening at home, reading papers in which he could find no interest, although they were full of telegrams reporting the first conversations at Brest-Litovsk. When he went to bed, he had resolved to go back to Finland and to leave Russia definitely. It was impossible for an honest man to associate in indirect fashion with a Government of bandits and to participate in the shame with which they were defiling the country.

XII

ILLUMINATION

SAVINSKI had a difficult day. In the morning, Semeonof telephoned to him in a tone that displeased him. . . . It seemed that there was in it a suggestion that they were accomplices, and that idea, especially at that moment, was odious to Savinski. Semeonof had announced his visit to the Bank of the North for the following day at noon and in such fashion as to make it impossible for Savinski to refuse the interview. Then, just as Savinski was sitting down at the table, an officer in the uniform of a common soldier arrived from Moscow, a messenger from Spasski. Spasski was full of hope and believed in the success of the movement in the South.

"We are going to rebuild a truly Russian center on Cossack territory, and that will be the saving of the country," was the substance of his message.

From questions put to his emissary, however, Savinski gathered that once more personal rivalries were playing a great part in the Don, that agreement between the generals was difficult, that Spasski himself, because of his past connections with revolution, did not meet with full acceptance, and finally that even in the villages the Bolsheviks had their parti-

sans. He had a very definite sense of the vanity of the work undertaken by his friend. But what could he do? One must play the game with the cards one holds, and all the afternoon Savinski hurried about in search of certain men prominent in financial and political circles with whom he had to make plans before sending a reply to Spasski. And, while he talked interminably of politics and business, he thought of the pleasure he would have in seeing Lydia again at five o'clock.

He arrived there late and in bad temper, and his discontent was increased when he saw that Lydia's friend Helene was with her.

Lydia greeted him in the most friendly fashion. She was gay and laughing. The little salon where she received him was pleasantly warm. The two young girls talked of their friends, of young men whom they had seen or of whom they had news. Of recent events, of politics, not a word. They were a hundred leagues from the revolution.

Savinski's ill temper was dispelled in this enchanted atmosphere; he joined in the conversation. He watched Lydia's animated face; she had become a child again and he found her once more as he had known her before the death of her cousin. He hesitated to ask her what she had to tell him, but Lydia brought the subject up herself. She had taken tea the evening before with Lord Douglas, who had taken a little apartment near the English Embassy. He was there only in the afternoons, for he was living now, as Savinski knew, with the Choupof-

Karamines. It was a party of four; he had invited her friend and a colleague from the Embassy. She and Helene exchanged impressions on this intimate reception and compared their recent experiences.

Savinski had all at once the impression of being out of the conversation, of belonging to a different order of beings, and of having no longer any link with Lydia. Had his brief journey to Finland been sufficient to create between them so profound an abyss? It seemed that Lydia had now, even here in Petrograd where they lived, interests and memories in which he had no part. He fell thus into somber thought, while the young girls continued to chatter with animation.

At times, he looked at Lydia. Never had she appeared to him more beautiful. She seemed made of an essence rarer than other women. Beside her, her friend Helene, though pleasing, seemed destined by nature to be her servant. Lydia had a way of her own of opening her great eyes and fixing them on you in such fashion that you seemed to read to the bottom of her soul. Could one imagine in so perfect a body, a purity more complete?

Savinski awaited the departure of Helene, that he might at last have Lydia to himself. As Helene rose to go, however, Lydia detained her and suggested that she have dinner with her. And, when the young girl demurred because she feared to go back to the Mokhovaia alone at night, Lydia urged that she sleep at the Volynski house, as she often did.

Savinski could stand no more and took leave of the two friends. Lydia accompanied him to the foyer. She seemed not to notice the somber mood into which her friend had fallen. As he was taking leave of her, she said to him,

"The real news, you know, Nicolas Vladimirovitch. Lord Douglas has asked me to marry him. He maintains that that will arrange everything, that with him I shall be at last in safety and that he will take me to England in January with the Ambassador, who is going back to London. That is the tone that he takes about it. Is it not very English?"

Savinski felt himself grow pale. He made an effort to retain his self-control. He looked straight at Lydia. She was smiling, but he thought that her slightly full lower lip was delicately contracted. There was a moment of silence.

Then, in a perfectly natural voice, he said,

"That would, indeed, be a solution, Lydia Serguevna. Good-night."

And he went out.

In the light of this scene, Savinski all at once saw clearly within himself.

"I have been mistaken," he said, "regarding my feeling for Lydia. I thought that I had for her a deep friendship, that I saw in her a child. Error, illusion! It is not friendship that I have for her, it is love. It is not a child that I see in her, but a young girl who may tomorrow be a woman."

Four lines from a song of the day crossed his memory:

> *"The grass has been trodden,*
> *Not by you,*
> *I have been made a woman,*
> *Not by you."*

"It is perfectly obvious. Why have I stayed in Petrograd, when I had every reason to go? Because of her. Why do I almost never go to Finland now? Why that anguish that seized me the other day in the midst of my family? Because I feel myself separated from them on her account. I am attached to her, that is the exact word. She is dearer to me than everything. That is it. She fills my life; it is magnificent, it is unimaginable. Would I have believed myself capable of so deep a feeling? I had become a sort of nice family bear; I was going to end my days that way in a pleasant somnolence. And then I meet her! And then these troubled times in which one no longer knows how one lives . . . ! And everything is again called in question. I am not dead, thank God! How I long to live!"

Swept away by the enthusiasm of this discovery, Savinski paced up and down his workroom. He had not dined alone, and his mind had been diverted from the thoughts that were dear to him by a long and wearying discussion of business matters with his two guests. But his brain had been working subconsciously, and, now that he was alone again, he came all at once to a clear view of his feelings. The

discovery that he made about them astonished and delighted him so greatly that for the moment he thought of nothing more. He, Nicolas Vladimirovitch Savinski, who for fifteen years and more had hidden himself in the narrow circle of his family, had found there all his pleasures and all that happiness on earth stood for, here he was, at forty-five, in love with a young girl of eighteen.

He studied himself in the mirror. The years, it was true, had left no great mark on him. A few lines more deeply bitten, a few white hairs, but his face remained clean cut and strong. For the rest, a sort of colossus, whose two feet rested firmly on the earth. It was then only that he said to himself,

"I love Lydia, but she, she does not love me. She has friendship for me, much friendship, a great attachment,—that and nothing more. That is obvious."

Strangely enough, this thought caused him at the moment not the least pain. It was a fact that was beyond all discussion. The thing that remained magnificent and surprising was the feeling born in him, Savinski. . . . Yes, but Lord Douglas? Was he going to take Lydia away from him? That thought seemed to him at once unbearable. He was entirely willing to love Lydia without hope of return, but he could not suffer that she should love another, nor that she should leave Petrograd. He had need of her continual presence beside him. Without her, now, he was nothing; without her, life was empty; an unendurable weariness weighed upon him.

The face of the young lord passed before his eyes. He was handsome as a god; no woman could resist him. But Lydia? She was not like the others. She had a Russian soul; she would not be enamoured of the British Antinous. . . And then, to leave her father? Impossible. . . But if the Prince Volynski should die? Would not the instinct for safety then be all powerful? Would she not consent to living a great and safe life in England . . . ?

Savinski passed a restless evening, turning and returning these conflicting thoughts in his mind.

In his heart, however, nothing prevailed against the joy of the discovery that he had made: he loved Lydia Serguevna. It was a gift of Heaven. His life was illumined by it.

The interview that Savinski had with Semeonof at noon next day at the Bank of the North, felt the effects of the disturbance of his nerves. It was stormy. The biting coolness of the young Bolshevist leader exasperated him. He permitted himself to answer him in a sharper tone than he had intended. Semeonof affected to place the revolution beyond discussion.

"It is an accomplished fact," he said. "A reasonable mind has only to bow before the fact and take its measures in accordance. It does not depend on you whether we are or are not in full revolution. That being the case, what are you going to do?"

"But your fact," returned Savinski, "what duration will it have? You have been in power for two

months. How much longer will you be there? Events move swiftly with us. Kerenski, who had been the most popular man in Russia, did not last six months in the tempest. Who can tell me that, in a few weeks perhaps, Lenine and Trotski will not be in flight . . . or hanged?"

Hardly had he flung out that last word before he wished it unspoken.

A smile curled Semeonof's dry lips. He spread his hands in a gesture usual with him and, looking fixedly at his companion, said harshly,

"You are right on one point, Nicolas Vladimirovitch, a man's life is not worth much in Russia today. It is well not to forget it."

And, having shot this winged thought, he waited to give it time to reach its mark.

He came back to a pleasanter tone of conversation.

"If you know our country," he said, "you ought to understand that it is with us and will be so for a long time, for we are giving to that astonishing being that a Russian is and that is completely incomprehensible to foreigners, the two things that he loves most in the world. The Russian has a taste for the absolute; I express myself badly: he has a passion for it. . . . And he adores change; again I am expressing less than the truth; it is the complete overturning of everything that he loves, the reversal of all values. We offer him these two idols. Nothing will be left of the old society and we shall give him a new system, an absolute that has never been

tried, which he will be the first to enjoy: Communism. What pride for a great people to think that they are impressing a new truth on the world!

"With that, you will make our Russian go far. For that, you can make him endure a thousand privations. . . And God knows whether we shall put his patience to the proof," he added with a frozen smile. "The Russian will astonish the universe by showing that he can live on nothing, but for an idea. We are a religious people, Nicolas Vladimirovitch. But the old forms of religion are void of all meaning. They are crumbling and returning to dust. With us, it is a new Gospel that is laid upon humanity."

He continued to discourse in this fashion. Savinski listened with impatience. He had the taste that all Russians have for theoretical discussions, but the discourse of Semeonof had irritated him and seemed to him beside the point. Losing oneself in political and social metaphysics is a pleasant occupation for idle men after dinner; but in his office in the bank, whence he had directed vast business dealings, he was accustomed to language nearer to reality. With an abrupt turn, Semeonof came back to practical matters. The question in hand was the organizing of the Bank of the People, which should absorb all the private banks that the State had seized, and he wished the advice of a financier so distinguished as Savinski.

Savinski could not help shrugging his shoulders.

"What are you telling me?" he said. "Do you know what banks live on? You think that they live

on money. . . Not at all. They live on credit. Without credit, not a bank in the world could keep its doors open a single day. Now, what is the credit of the Government to which you belong? None. You have seized the deposits. After that, who will bring you money? No one. It will be in vain that you multiply appeals and give the most formal assurances. Not a client—not even you yourself, my dear Leon Borissovitch—will entrust his funds to your bank.

"You are drawing with all speed two hundred million rubles a day. Very well, you will never see again a single one of the notes that you are putting in circulation. You are condemned to bankruptcy. You wanted my advice, there it is, clear and plain. You will not find a man who knows business who will tell you anything else. If you want us to work with you, give up Communism, for which no one in the world could establish the finances."

Semeonof considered for a moment.

"You belong to the old schools, Nicolas Vladimirovitch. You are a prisoner of the formulas in which you have been brought up. Is it possible that you can not adapt yourself to the new forms of society? That would be desirable, believe me. . . . That will be necessary. I do not give up the hope of seeing you working with us."

Savinski had a horror of Semeonof's banalities. He would have tolerated them in other men; they were inadmissible from the lips of a man of his character and his intelligence. More than that, in every interview that he had with the Bolshevist com-

missioner, the latter, with more or less discretion, took pains to make him feel that they were masters, that they would hesitate at nothing, and that if one wished to save his skin, he would be wise to keep on good terms with them.

However veiled were these allusions to the tyrannical power of the Bolsheviks, they were, literally, unendurable. It was one of the trials of those troubled times, and not the least of them, to be obliged to bend beneath the threat of a Terrorist dictator. Never did Savinski desire the success of Spasski more ardently than when he found himself face to face with Semeonof.

The latter rose, rapped his fingers on the back of his hand, strode up and down the office, looked out the window over Nevski, and remarked casually,

"We are going to arrest the English Ambassador."

Savinski started.

"You are mad," he exclaimed, without stopping to think.

Semeonof turned a cold look on him and replied in the most formal manner,

"The Government of the Soviets can not permit itself to be insulted by the British Government, which keeps behind bars such men as Tchitcherine and Petrof."

This time, Savinski had had enough of it, and, in his turn, in a manner most frigidly polite, he said,

"If we have not here the relations of man to man, I do not see the purpose of our interviews."

There were a few more remarks of no consequence, then Semeonof took his leave.

"We shall meet again," he said enigmatically. "If you have need of me, do not hesitate to telephone me."

Once Semeonof had gone, Savinski's wrath faded. He reflected a moment on the communication of the assistant commissioner of Foreign Affairs. Suddenly his face lighted and he smiled.

"It is a trick," he said to himself. "If Trotski had decided to arrest the English Ambassador, he would not send Semeonof to tell me about it. But, being clever tricksters, they have thought up this ingenious way of bringing pressure to bear on the Ambassador of His Britannic Majesty, for they are convinced that I shall make haste to tell him of our conversation."

He paused for a little, then went on,

"And, my word, it is plain enough that I must go and tell him and that their calculations are sufficiently exact. But the trick is no less evident and they do not for a moment think of arresting my honorable friend."

He asked for an appointment to see the Ambassador at about five o'clock, so that he might have his afternoon free. Returning very late for luncheon at his apartment, he found a line from Lydia saying that her father was worse and that she could not go out. She had telephoned to him several times without finding him in.

At five o'clock he went to the Embassy, where he

met Lord Douglas. He talked in friendly fashion with him for some minutes.

"Does he love Lydia?" he asked himself, as he talked with that admirable young man. "But no, he does not love her. She is beautiful, she is young, he finds her attractive; he desires her, but that is all. He does not love her, he will never love her. Can he even imagine what it is to love Lydia?"

He smiled with joy, so strong was that certainty within him. It remained with him during the half-hour that he spent with the Ambassador. In the evening, he telephoned to his friend. Prince Volynski had had a bad day; he was disturbed and wanted to see Savinski as soon as possible. Would the next day at four be convienent for him?

He made the engagement and asked Lydia if he might talk with her for a little while, when he left her father.

"Certainly," said Lydia. "I have a great many troubles, and I shall be glad to see you."

XIII

FATHER AND DAUGHTER

THE shortest days of the year had come, and night had already fallen when Savinski was conducted to the little room that Prince Serge never left now. The Prince was, as usual, in his armchair, a shawl over his shoulders, another across his knees. Savinski was struck by his extreme thinness; his eyes brilliant with fever were sunk under the brows; his right hand that rested on the arm of the chair was wan and emaciated; the lengthened nails seemed to belong already to a corpse.

"It is the end," thought Savinski on seeing him. "Lydia will be left alone and will have no one but me."

Already he had forgotten Lord Douglas.

The Prince turned toward him with difficulty.

"I am happy to see you," he said in a low voice.

A fit of coughing shook him. When it had passed, he smiled sadly.

"I am done for," he said. "You see me back from Andalusia. It is a pity. . . . What a beautiful country! One smells Arabia there yet, the odor of spices fills the nostrils when the south wind blows the dust in the streets. . . I am very sensitive to perfumes, Nicolas Vladimirovitch. Perhaps it is because of my

large nose. . . . You have noticed, my dear friend, that I have not a Russian nose. One of my grandmothers must have loved some Circassian down there at the edge of the Black Sea, where it is warm. . . . At certain moments, it seems to me that I still feel the warmth of the Orient in my veins. Do you believe that we have lived before on this earth? If so, I have been one of the Moors of Bobadilla at Cordova, near the Guadalquivir that in summer is almost dry between its burned banks. I remember, I remember. . . ."

He laughed, and his laughter brought on a long attack of coughing. A servant was coming in with the tea. The Prince came back from his dream, offered a cigarette to Savinski, took one himself, and said,

"I ask your pardon for my babbling. It is the air of Petrograd that has poisoned me. Tell me the news, Nicolas Vladimirovitch. I have something to tell you, yes, something very important, but presently . . . presently, when we have had tea. . . ."

Savinski informed him concerning the situation as he saw it. There could be no doubt that the Bolsheviks were strengthening their hold on the power. The peace negotiations were going forward at a great pace, since Trotski himself had left for Brest-Litovsk. In the interior, the disorder was more complete; the ruin surpassed anything that could be imagined. And now the Germans had already sent a financial and commercial commission, headed by

Count Mirbach. Old Lamshof of the Deutsche Bank was there, too. Savinski had not yet seen him, but he would have an interview with him at the first opportunity.

"What the Germans will do," concluded Savinski, "we have no idea. If they choose to advance an army corps here, who will stop them? They will be acclaimed, and your charming neighbor will give great receptions in their honor. We shall all go to them, moreover. We like to be *du côté du manche,* as the French say. It is a national failing. But can the Germans undertake to feed this starving city? Should one hope for it? I confess to you that I no longer know what should be desired."

"I detest them even more than the Bolsheviks," replied the Prince. "God will spare me that shame; I shall not see them. . . But let us leave that. Put a log on the fire, wait, that big one there that is waiting her turn with impatience. Ah, she is going to flame, the gay girl, presently. A year ago, she was in a beautiful forest in Finland with her sisters. And now, a little smoke in the air, a little warmth in my lean body. It passes like a dream, and then,—nothing; there, there . . . ! Now we must talk seriously, my friend," he said, shaking his head, "very seriously, you see."

He paused a moment, and Savinski wondered whether this feeble old man was, by an abrupt change of thought, about to ask him to arrange the difficult passing of the frontier and to make plans for a journey to Egypt or Sicily.

The Prince, however, did not leave him long in doubt.

"It is about Lydia," he said, "my little Lydia. . . . You understand, my friend, that she is my one care. A little flower like her in this city of madness! Soldiers and bandits in the streets, and this Lenine, this Trotski at Smolni . . . ! What is going to become of her Nicolas Vladimirovitch? She is so lovely, that child. . . . You have noticed, when she passes, people stop and look at her. She is a beauty, my friend, I am proud of her, I assure you, very proud. . . . But all that is as nothing to the worth of her soul. That is all purity, not a hidden thought, not a reserve, not a thing put out of sight; all is clear, frank, good, and generous; I read her, I know all that she thinks, all that she feels. Well then, I tell you, she has an incomparable heart, my Lydotchka. . . . So, you see, I tremble for her. She is going to be alone. . . . Only, now, there is a new thing; yes, I understand, you know it. Lydia has told you, she tells you everything. This Lord Douglas wants to marry her. . . ."

Here the Prince sighed and stopped to take breath. He seemed very sad. Savinski, who had been deeply interested in the conversation since it had Lydia as its theme, began to ask himself a little uneasily what Prince Serge was driving at.

"To tell you the truth," went on the old man, "I admire the English, but I do not like them. They are people without ill will, but they are hard. No heart, my friend, no openness of soul. Naturally, I would

never have thought of giving Lydia to an Englishman. Only, you see now, Nicolas Vladimirovitch, I am done for, and then, there is the revolution, and Lydia is here in this city that she will not leave. . . . Of course, she denies the danger, you know her, but she does not fool me by these childish tricks. It is because of me that she will not go. . . ."

"But what answer has she given to Lord Douglas?" interrupted Savinski, suddenly anxious to know exactly what had happened.

"Ha, my friend," said the old Prince laughing, "she has given him no answer, just as girls always do. She evaded it jestingly, and that is all. . . . Only, Lord Douglas came to see her again yesterday, before dinner, and that time insisted. . . . It seems that he is superb, this lad. What do you think of him?"

"Magnificent and insignificant," exclaimed Savinski nervously. "He has a title, he is handsome beyond all reason, he is young, he is rich. He is an Adonis with a check-book. And that being said, there is nothing more to add. The very idea that he might be a husband for Lydia Serguevna, is laughable."

"Yes, my friend, I see, I see, and you are right. . . . But, under the circumstances in which we find ourselves, I am forced to think otherwise. You understand, Nicolas Vladimirovitch, he is an honorable man, and it means safety. . . . If he marries Lydia, he takes her away to England. As for me, I shall die here, of course, but I shall have no more cares, my friend, you see how it is; I shall fall asleep some fine day in peace of soul because I know that my

daughter is safe from danger. That is the great thing, my friend. . . . There is no rest without that."

He spoke in a very low tone, with a calm assurance, as if there were no longer the slightest doubt in his mind as to the decision to make.

"However," he resumed, "it is neither I nor you who is to decide. It is Lydia. Lydia, one does not do as one wishes with her. Still, she is very reasonable, my daughter. But, in a matter like that, I have no influence with her, because she feels that I am sacrificing myself. . . . So we have incredible dialogues, Nicolas Vladimirovitch, which upset me. We disputed on this subject for a long time, last night, and finally she said to me very seriously,

" 'Do you not love me any more, Papa, that you want to be rid of me? If that is true, then tell me, and I will go away from here.'

"Ah, well, I, my dear man, I am old and feeble, and when I heard my daughter speak that way, I took her in my arms; I cried like a child, and I begged her to stay with me. . . . What would you expect, it is deplorable, but what could I do? And the strange thing is that she wept with me, and I do not really know why. She, also, has bad nerves, we all have bad nerves, Nicolas Vladimirovitch. I can not say anything more to my daughter on that subject. That is why I have asked you to come. . . ."

"You are the only person that Lydia loves. . . . Yes, she loves you, my friend. . . . Everything that you say to her is a word of the gospel. You are

a strong man, Nicolas Vladimirovitch, and then, you are disinterested in this matter. . . . Talk to her. Beg her to accept Lord Douglas (may the devil fly away with him, just the same), and tell her the truth, that I am going to die, that she will be alone, that it will be too great a grief to me to leave her in this accursed city. . . . I beg you, do all that should be done. I . . . I can not talk any more. We should go to crying again, both of us. You understand how stupid it is. . . . So, I am asking you to help me. You will persuade her to accept, since it must be. . . . You are her friend."

The Prince was silent; he was overcome by emotion and he was breathing with difficulty. Sunk down in his chair, he seemed to have but a few sparks of life left in him.

Savinski looked at him without speaking. His fine face had hardened; he had grown older. He passed a hand over his forehead and, without further reflection, rose from his chair.

"Very well, I see what must be done. You are right. We must think only of her, now. Neither you nor I can protect her. . . . Do you know where I shall find her?"

"Thank you, my friend, thank you," said the Prince, holding out his hand. "Wait, a servant will take you to her. My wife is downstairs and, you know, we can heat only the front of the house. . . . She will receive you in her room. That does not matter between us. . . . You are our friend, our only friend. . . . Thank you."

A few minutes later, Savinski, for the first time, entered Lydia's room. It was a large room, with two windows looking out on the quay of the Neva, and it was but dimly lighted. An electric light in the ceiling spread a pale glow, for there was a shortage of coal at the electric lighting plant and it furnished only an inadequate current. Placed on a table, an oil lamp with a large shade threw its light on Lydia, lying on a divan and covered with an antique shawl. She had taken down her hair, and when she rose to come to meet her friend, it floated about her. It fell to her hips in a soft veil, waving and golden, which seemed to absorb all the light in the room.

Finding her thus, Savinski felt his heart falter. He had never seen her with her hair not dressed, in that déshabillé which presupposes a greater intimacy, and, for the first time, he felt rising within him a dark and passionate desire to gather her in his arms and keep her for himself. This was the woman that he must give up! Ah, the sacrifice that Prince Serge demanded of him was beyond human strength! Under the shock of the emotion that was tearing at him, he hesitated an instant.

But Lydia was already beside him.

"You will excuse me, Nicolas Vladimirovitch, for receiving you thus. I had a headache and I have undone my hair because I could not bear the weight of it."

She looked up at him.

"But you are pale, my friend. What is the matter? Are you tired . . . ? Nothing is troubling you,

I hope. They are going to bring us some tea. Sit down here beside me on the divan."

She took his arm and drew him toward it. But Savinski refused to place himself near her on the divan and selected a chair on the other side of the table. They could hear in the next room the steps of the nurse Katia, who was coming and going arranging her mistress's linen. From time to time, she came into the room to say a few words to Lydia.

A maid brought the tea. Lydia was asking Savinski the news of his family. Had he been satisfied with his visit to Finland? Were his children well?

Savinski, in spite of the conflicting emotions that were torturing him, noted with surprise that there was a hint of something changed in the tone in which she spoke. She talked with great friendliness, yet there was something a little distant, a little conventional, that did not escape him and that was new between them.

He told her of the life that his wife and children were living out there in the country. He spoke of the impatience with which Boris talked of coming back to Petrograd and of how difficult it was for Sonia to spend her days so far from him and troubled by constant anxiety about him. He talked for some time without looking at Lydia and, as he concluded, he raised his eyes. Lydia was half lying back on the divan, her hair a sheet of gold beneath her. But he was astonished to see that her mouth was drawn, as if she were suffering.

Decidedly, the air of the room was heavy. There was something inexplicable between them, and they felt its mysterious weight. It was, no doubt, the great question raised by Lord Douglas's suit. The discussion of it had to come, and Savinski, without further delay, flung himself into it, much as a man who has decided to end his days might fling himself into the abyss, with eyes shut.

"Where do you stand regarding Lord Douglas, Lydia Serguevna?" he asked. "I have thought much of what you told me."

Lydia sat up, fixed her eyes on him as if she sought to read to the back of his mind, and said to him abruptly,

"And you yourself, Nicolas Vladimirovitch, where do you stand regarding Lord Douglas?"

The unexpectedness of this question, the direct and surprising fashion in which it established a link between Lydia, Lord Douglas, and Savinski himself, left him dumbfounded.

There was a brief silence, then Savinski, taking his stand but not daring to look at the young girl who, for her part, did not take her eyes from him, said,

"I think, Lydia Serguevna, that under the circumstances in which we are, you have no right to refuse him."

"Are you sure that that is your own opinion?" she said in a clear voice. "You must not deceive me, Nicolas Vladimirovitch. Be careful. You know that I attach great value to what you tell me. . . . I beg

of you, weigh your words. They will have great influence today. Consider seriously. . . . My father has told me the same thing that you say. Without doubt, he repeated it to you just now, and it may be that he has influenced you . . . ? It is you that I want to hear, and not my father speaking through you."

She had grown strangely animated as she spoke. Yet she had lost all her color, and her eyes were shining almost black in her pale face.

Savinski, who was admired for his imperturbable calm and his smiling good humor in the most heated controversies in business, was disconcerted before so vehement a charge. He did not know what reply to make. Was he to betray the old and pathetic Prince? Was he to betray himself? He hesitated, stammered, tried to get out of the difficulty by a few generalities about the exceptional circumstances, the concern that one naturally had in such troubled times for those who were dear. He was ashamed of himself and of the vague words that he was speaking at so grave a moment. He ended, at last, with that meaningless phrase,

"We wish only your happiness, my dear friend."

He was surprised to find that Lydia seemed satisfied with this equivocal reply and did not bring him back to the exact question that she had asked. She seemed calmer now, happier, and she changed the subject by asking him what he had been doing since he had returned to Petrograd.

In a sudden impulse to unburden his mind, Sa-

vinski told her of the visit that he had received from Semeonof at the bank the day before, that the man had exasperated him, had made him lose his temper when he should have kept it, and that he feared that he had made an enemy of him. He quoted to her the remark of Semeonof concerning the worth of a man's life.

Lydia, who had listened with a great deal of interest, broke in and said to him quickly,

"That man can be very malicious, Nicolas Vladimirovitch. . . . I do not like him; he frightens me. Look out that he does not try to take revenge. He is all-powerful, it seems."

Savinski shrugged his shoulders.

"Things are as they are," he said with fatalism. "We are in the hands of God, Lydia Serguevna."

It seemed to Lydia that he looked very tired.

She reflected a moment. Again her face took on a serious expression, her lips tightened.

"I want to ask you another question. Do not laugh at me, Nicolas Vladimirovitch, for questioning you this way today. After your interview with Semeonof, did you not think of fleeing to Finland?"

Savinski looked at her with a bewildered air, as if he did not understand what she was asking him.

"Fleeing to Finland, I . . . ? Why . . . ? It did not even come into my mind, Lydia Serguevna."

Lydia realized that he was speaking the truth. And, again, there was a silence, interrupted at last by a servant coming to announce dinner. Savinski rose to take his leave. Lydia detained him.

"Wait a minute," she said. "I will go down with you. Give me just time to arrange my hair."

She sat down at the dressing-table and lifted the heavy hair that covered her shoulders and back. She combed it, rolled it in two twists, and brought them back to the back of her head, where she fastened them with a large comb. Savinski, without a word, watched her. To be present thus at her toilette, seemed to bring a new intimacy between them and he felt vast waves of happiness flooding him. He thought not at all. To see her near him was enough.

When she had finished, she rose and they went down the stairs together. As they went, she said to him in the tone of a little girl who has been naughty and who wants to know if one is still cross with her,

"Will you go walking with me again, Nicolas Vladimirovitch . . . ? I will explain to you the great thing that you have not understood, something too complicated for a man like you. I will tell you. . . ."

She laughed happily and teased him so prettily that Savinski began laughing with her.

In the foyer, as Savinski was leaving, she said to him only,

"Could you believe that I would marry Lord Douglas?"

And, light and swift, she was gone.

XIV

A DISAGREEABLE VISIT

SAVINSKI wakened late the next morning, after a night in which sleep had long fled from him. As he was dressing slowly, a bell rang. A moment later, his maid brought him the card of a man who wished to see him. He read on the card, "Bogdanof, sub-commissioner of the Kazanskaia quarter." Savinski frowned. What the devil did the police of the quarter want of him?

The commissioner entered. He was a little Jew, lean, pale, and nervous, who wore glasses. He spoke with great politeness. In a few words he informed Savinski of the object of his visit. A revision of passports was being made, and he had come to request Savinski to entrust his to him for a brief time.

Savinski objected. He could not give up his passport. What would become of him in a city where one every day ran the risk of being arrested in the street? Besides, he had a visa for crossing the frontier of Finland, where his family were living and where he might be called at any time.

The little commissioner bowed respectfully.

"I understand, Nicolas Vladimirovitch, I understand. . . . I am deeply grieved, believe me. I would give much to spare you this annoyance. But,

alas, the order is express and general. All passports must be visaed by the commissioner. . . . There are, regrettably, many false passports in circulation. Hence the measure that we are compelled to take."

Savinski persisted in his refusal. He would telephone himself to Foreign Affairs and arrange the matter.

The little Jew objected that the matter did not originate in Foreign Affairs, but in the commissariat of the quarter.

Savinski's anger rose little by little. The commissioner remained smiling, respectful, but inflexible.

"But if you had an order from Semeonof himself," said Savinski.

Bogdanof bowed before that name. His face took on an expression of irony that did not escape his questioner.

"Without doubt," said the commissioner, "without doubt, if Leon Borissovitch should intervene, the matter would be dropped. That would be a great exception, I assure you. . . . But personally I should be very happy, believe me, very happy. . . . ."

Savinski was already at the telephone. Unfortunately Semeonof had not yet come in at the commissariat of Foreign Affairs. On a call to his house, a man's voice, having asked Savinski's name, answered at once that Leon Borissovitch had just gone out.—Where had he gone?—They did not know.

Savinski hung up the receiver. He was very angry.

"I suppose," he said, "that you can wait until I reach Semeonof on the telephone."

The little Jew sighed.

"I must turn in the passport," he said. "It is truly distressing. I have no discretion in the matter, you understand. I would be glad to oblige you, but . . . Why, judge for yourself. I have orders."

His obsequiousness seemed to Savinski exaggerated. He took out his watch.

"It is eleven o'clock," he said, "give me until noon."

The commissioner grew paler still and made a gesture of alarm.

"Impossible," he said, "you see why . . . How can I put it . . . ? But you grasp it."

"I understand nothing whatever," said Savinski exasperated.

Suddenly it flashed upon him; the little Bogdanof was afraid that he might take advantage of that hour to escape.

"You are afraid that I shall run away," he said laughing. "Ah, ah, I see how it is. And it goes without saying that you will not be satisfied with my word of honor."

Bogdanof protested by way of politeness, but it was evident that this was exactly what he feared.

Savinski made his decision. He went to his desk, found a paper there and held it out to the little Jew, who bowed repeatedly.

"I thank you, Nicolas Vladimirovitch. I am going to give you, as is right, a receipt that will serve you

as identification paper until I return your passport."

And he handed him a sheet bearing the stamp of the commissariat and on which he wrote the number of the passport and the necessary descriptions of the person to whom the receipt was given. Then he went out.

"Now I am a prisoner," Savinski said to himself; "the prison is large, it is all Russia, but it is a prison, just the same."

For an hour, he pursued Semeonof on the telephone. He did not find him, either at home, at the commissariat of Foreign Affairs, or at Smolni. Semeonof appeared to have vanished from Petrograd. Weary of the attempt, he gave up these useless calls, promising himself to go in the afternoon to the old Ministry on the square of the Palace.

Then he went to see Ivan Choupof-Karamine. He was at home. Savinski asked whether any one had demanded his passport. No, he had heard of nothing of the kind.

That set Savinski thinking. The whole thing was, without doubt, a maneuver of the ingenious Semeonof, who had chosen this way to make his honorable friend Savinski feel the dependence in which he held him. Leaving Choupof-Karamine, he went across the court to see Lydia Serguevna. He must let her know that he would be unable to go out with her that afternoon, for until the affair of the passport was settled, he would have no rest.

He was very much disturbed, but the sight of Lydia, whom he found alone in the drawing-room,

restored him to calmness. In good humor, he told her the tale of his morning. The thing that seemed to impress Lydia most in his report was the fact that he could not leave Petrograd. She made him repeat it twice.

"You are a prisoner here," she said.

It was only after she had fixed that point definitely that she showed some concern at the idea of seeing her friend persecuted by the Bolsheviks.

"It is part of the game that we are playing," replied Savinski. "I think that I have still sufficient hold over Semeonof to arrange the matter."

Lydia was silent a moment. Then she said,

"If you do not succeed, would you like me to see Semeonof?"

Savinski started. What mad idea was in her head?

"But you do not think such a thing, Lydia Serguevna! Have you seen him again recently?"

"No," she said smiling.

"Then why?" he exclaimed.

She shrugged her shoulders lightly.

"It is an idea that just happened to occur to me. . . . You know that he has always been nice to me and seemed to seek me when we used to meet at Nathalie's. So I thought that, for a little thing like that, he might grant to me what he would refuse to you. Then, too, it might be annoying to you to have to ask anything from him."

"No, no," cried Savinski, "there can be no question of it. It is a matter between him and me. I am annoyed with him only for preventing me from see-

ing you this afternoon. That I shall not forgive him."

As he was taking leave of Lydia, he said to her,

"Do you know that I could not sleep. . . . Yes, I was trying to find the meaning of what you said to me in parting yesterday. I did not succeed."

Lydia looked at him mischievously.

"You see that a little girl knows more about it than you do. I will explain it to you tomorrow, that is, of course, if it still interests you."

All the afternoon, Savinski did not succeed in finding Semeonof. He wasted his time going from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Smolni. Finally he left a rather curtly phrased note for him at his house.

The next day, early in the morning, Semeonof called him on the telephone. In a tone of polished courtesy, he presented most complete excuses. He had been tied up by important meetings with the commission of German delegates. As for the matter of the passport, that was already arranged. He had given the necessary orders. He begged Savinski not to hold it against him. There was, alas, still a great deal of confusion in the bureaus. All that would be straightened out gradually by force of work and good will. An hour later, little Bogdanof brought back the indispensable passport.

The incident left a bad impression on Savinski's mind. This game of cat and mouse was intensely displeasing to him. For the first time, he felt that

his position was rather critical. If Semeonof learned that he had maintained relations with Spasski, that situation would, in a flash, become dangerous. He had a very definite sense that he had not the least hold over Semeonof. The man was a cold political machine, the working of which nothing would stop. He considered the situation for a long time.

The first thing to do was to warn Spasski not to send his messengers directly to him any longer. They must find an intermediate person. For Savinski would not—less than ever at that moment—give up the struggle against the tyrants at Smolni. Quite to the contrary, the incident of the passport gave him an even more passionate desire to see them hanged from the lamp-posts of the bridges across the Neva. Seized with a sudden longing for action, he started out to find the friend of whom he had need in order to communicate with the leaders of the Army of the Don. When he reached the street, he took care to look about to see whether he was being followed. No, the street and the quay were deserted. As a precaution, he went along the Moika canal and passed through one of the first houses, which had an exit onto the Millionaia. There was no spy on his tracks.

About the middle of the afternoon, he met Lydia Serguevna. Young girls had for a long time had a great deal of liberty in Russia and went out alone or in the company of any man they chose. If they

were concerned not to compromise themselves, they avoided appearing often with the same man.

Since the revolution and especially since the seizing of the power by the Bolsheviks, these voluntary restrictions had been abolished; if Savinski and Lydia Serguevna chose for their walks places little frequented, such as the quays, the Summer Garden, or that of the Bronze Cavalier, it was by preference and not by prudence; for no one would have been surprised to see the daughter of Prince Volynski out walking with a friend of her father, especially when that friend was the very notable Nicolas Vladimirovitch Savinski, whom every one who knew him, knew to be a model husband and, of all men in Petrograd, the most devoted to his home. Therefore, since it was only three days to Christmas and they both had purchases to make, they did not hesitate to take the elegant Morskaia and the Nevski Prospect. There were many people on the walks of the great avenue, a crowd that went about its business without enthusiasm, without gaiety. Present anxiety and concern for the future filled their souls.

This was the moment, too, when the banks had been seized by the Bolsheviks, when no one could draw out the money he had on deposit. So it was without joy that one saw the coming of the holidays. Shops that sold luxuries were empty. Only the provision stores were filled. When people heard, however, the prices asked for the turkeys, geese, or chickens necessary for Christmas dinner, some went

away discouraged and shaking their heads, though the greater number bought just the same, with that admirable indifference to questions of money that is so usual among Russians.

Lydia and Savinski were too much absorbed in each other to take interest in the spectacle of the street. They had tea in a shop recently opened just off Nevski by former officers and society women who had lost their fortunes. It happened that Lydia knew one of the officers, whom she had met at a ball. He came to talk with them, a tall lad with regular features, who took his changed position with the best grace in the world. In other times, Savinski would have found him of no importance. At that moment in Russian life, the man displeased him infinitely. Had he nothing better to do at such a time? On the side of the Bolsheviks, people at least were working, were expending a prodigious energy; the detestable Semeonof had a will that never bent. And here before him was this great booby of a notable family, carrying trays of tea! Savinski thought of Spasski and the Army of the Don, the recruiting of which went forward with such difficulty, and thinking somberly of these things, he was silent.

Lydia, seeing him thus preoccupied, laid her hand on his and, bending toward him, asked whether something was troubling him.

Savinski was struck by the expression she gave to those simple words. It seemed to him that there was in it something close to tenderness. Again, his life

was transformed. He looked at Lydia and said to her,

"There is no trouble that your voice does not drive away."

He had never spoken to her so directly, and he feared that he had said too much, for he fancied that the color deepened in Lydia's cheek. For a moment, embarrassment left him silent, then he remembered the scene of the evening before and the explanation that Lydia owed him of her reasons for not accepting Lord Douglas. He asked her what they were.

"It is hard to say here," she replied. "Still, I think I shall succeed. Only, come a little nearer to me, Nicolas Vladimirovitch. People must not hear us."

Savinski drew up his chair and leaned toward her across the table, his face almost touching hers. She began thus with a hint of feeling in her voice,

"I understand very well, Nicolas Vladimirovitch, why Papa wants me to marry that Englishman. Papa can see only one thing, that he is ill and that Petrograd today is not a safe city for people who belong to our social rank. So, since I am what he loves most in the world, he consents to depriving himself of me. The marriage that he proposes for me is what one might call a sensible solution. . . . But is it at such a time as this that any one is going to talk to me about a sensible solution, a sensible solution in this city of madmen? To do something wise, considered, something that arranges everything, in this

Russia that we have before our eyes. . . . But the very thought of it is horrible . . . ! Today, when one does not know whether one will be alive tomorrow, to look so far ahead and arrange all one's life—think of it—by a single decision, but it is absurd, my dear friend, it is absurd. . . . What you propose for me can not be done, just because of the revolution."

She looked triumphantly at Savinski, as if asking herself,

"Can I make fun in this fashion of this grand gentleman, so intelligent, so well-known? Why, yes indeed, I can, and it is delightful."

Savinski did not answer. The sophistry of Lydia was palpable, obvious, but there was about it something so alluring that Savinski had neither the will nor the strength to refute it. Moreover, he felt in his heart that they were living a charming hour in their strange life together. Why look beyond it? Matters would arrange themselves.

XV

AN INCIDENT

SAVINSKI passed Christmas in Petrograd. He had talked long with old Lamshof of the Deutsche Bank. Their interview had been so interesting that they had arranged another meeting for the day before Christmas. It was a unique opportunity to learn the intentions of the Germans, what their views were regarding the Bolsheviks, what agreements they were making with them, and, above all, how long they intended to leave them in power. For there was no doubt in Savinski's mind that the existence of Lenine and of Trotski was in the hands of the Fates of Berlin. He, therefore, sent a message to his wife, saying that business matters were detaining him, but that he would be with her and the children for New Year's Day.

He wrote to her in the most kindly tone. He was full of tenderness for her. Now that he was in love with some one else, he realized more strongly than ever the bonds of friendship that united him with Sonia. The face of his wife appeared to him of a rare nobility. He had entire confidence in her. She was all goodness. He would have liked to tell her of the new feelings that were stirring him. He could have no other confidante.

Nathalie gave a supper for some fifteen people on Christmas Eve. Champagne was served and there was great gayety. This time, Nathalie, who had observed the growing coldness of Lord Douglas toward herself and the pleasure that he took in talking to Lydia, had placed the young girl beside Savinski. He felt himself grown young by twenty years. But even then had he had this immense zest for living, this exaltation that seemed to rise from the inmost depths? His past, over which he threw but a casual glance, seemed to him dull, colorless. The young enchantress that he had beside him, had poured for him an elixir that gave a new beauty to the whole world.

He looked indulgently on the people around him. Lord Douglas himself seemed to him charming. That Antinous of Thule bore no grudge to Lydia for the refusal by which she had answered his suit. Doubtless he did not consider it final. Very probably he felt sure of eventually winning the game with the cards that he had in his hand. He laughed and jested with the young girl, and Savinski took no offense. Even when the time came to accompany Lydia back to her father's house, he saw Lord Douglas depart with her and was untroubled, so firm was his conviction that a girl like Lydia would never marry this man of a race so different from her own.

A few days later there occurred between Lydia and Savinski an incident that seemed to him incomprehensible. It was a blow so sudden that it left him shaken.

This is what happened. He had gone out with the young girl to do some shopping on Nevski, and they had stopped at a toy shop on the way, as he wanted to buy presents for his children for New Year's Day. Up to that time, Lydia had been in the gayest, even the tenderest, mood. In the shop, it seemed to him that she was preoccupied. He was rather long in choosing the things he wanted. Lydia had nothing to say. When he questioned her, she answered in monosyllables, and Savinski was at loss to understand this sudden change.

It chanced that at that moment Lord Douglas came into the shop. Lydia was very cordial to him, and Lord Douglas was gay and laughing as usual. He showed interest in the toys that Savinski was examining. He asked news of Savinski's wife and congratulated him on having installed her in Finland, although Petrograd was a very interesting city at the moment. Savinski must offer her his greeting when he should see her.

Savinski thanked him and said,

"I shall spend New Year's Day with them. I am leaving day after tomorrow."

Then he turned back to looking at the toys that were being shown him. A moment later, Lydia said very distinctly to Lord Douglas.

"Will you take me home? It is growing late, and I have an engagement."

Douglas, delighted, acquiesced. Then Lydia turned to Savinski and held out her hand, saying,

"*Au revoir,* Nicolas Vladimirovitch, I am so sorry

to leave you, but I am late. I shall see you again soon, shall I not?"

She said these words in the formal and conventional tone in which Nathalie Choupof-Karamine herself might have said them and went out, before Savinski, in his amazement at such an unforeseen turn, could stop her. He could only stammer some commonplace words, but she was already gone, leaving Savinski disconcerted face to face with a row of Russian dolls with brilliantly painted cheeks, which looked at him with their unchanging stare.

What was in Lydia's mind? How could one explain this sudden display of temper? How could it be that after all that had been said between them, she would leave him deliberately to go with Lord Douglas? What was this engagement of which she had spoken? Savinski admitted that he was incapable of understanding the soul of this young girl. He was lost in unknown country. . . .

What did he know of women, after all? A long period of marriage had separated him from society. His wife was without complications, without pretense, without subterfuge. He read her like an open book, and never had he been impelled to ask himself questions about her. The simplicity of her character, her even temper, left no room for any mystery. She was his wife, first of all, and would never belong to any one else; then she was the mother of his children. He had lived with her for fifteen years at the height of affectionate tranquillity, all his en-

ergies absorbed by the immense business of which he had the direction.

Before he had married her, in the years between twenty and thirty, he had had many adventures. He was a very handsome lad then, fairly prominent in social life, and he lived in a society as far from Puritan principles as New England is from Russian territory. He had known successes in which he had taken no particular pride, because they had cost him nothing, and partings which had left him only the pleasant sense of liberty regained, after having been lost for a few weeks or months. . . . He had never put himself in the way of complicated problems. The equations that he had had to solve had not been of a sort that required intellectual effort.

Thus he found himself stupid in face of the capricious impulse of Lydia. What did it mean? He studied on it for a long time. Had he hurt her in some unintentional way? He searched his thoughts. No, he was sure that he had not wounded her in any way. Had she guessed that his feelings toward her were not those of the friend he pretended to be? That thought held something alluring for Savinski and he lingered over it. Had she realized her strength, the power that she had over him, and did she, like every other woman, immediately wish to abuse it? Even if the first of these hypotheses was right, it would be necessary, in order that the second should be admissible, to presuppose a Lydia very different from the young girl whose beloved image he

carried in his heart. These contradictory thoughts struggled for a long time in Savinski's sorrowful head. He gave up trying to find an answer to so difficult a problem and decided to ask Lydia some day with that simplicity that there was between them.

As it happened, however, he could not see her again before he left for Finland. She was, so they told him when he telephoned, slightly ill and obliged to stay in bed. He wrote her a note to wish her a happy New Year and to say *au revoir* to her. He would be back in Petrograd the second or third of January. He had no reply from her. He had not asked any, it was true, yet he was disappointed to receive none.

The day before New Year's Day, he left early in the morning by the first train. At the frontier, a difficulty arose. The Bolshevist commissioner declared that the old visas were no longer good. There had now to be a visa from Foreign Affairs added on a form that he showed him. Again, Savinski felt that it was useless to try to force the matter. Nevertheless, he was very much exasperated. He thought of the disappointment of his wife and children. It seemed to him that he was doing them wrong in not passing New Year's Day with them.

One of the officials, who was on the staff of the bureau of passports and who had held the same position under the old Imperial administration, had known Savinski for a long time. Taking advantage

of a moment when the Bolshevist commissioner, a great wild-eyed devil of a sailor from Cronstadt, was away for a moment, this man said that he was going to Petrograd by motor on a matter connected with the service and that he would gladly take him. It was only about twenty miles. If everything went well, they would be there before noon and Savinski might be able to get his visa from the commissariat of Foreign Affairs in time to take the early afternoon train. To avoid awakening the suspicions of the head of the post, Savinski was to wait for him a little way down the road.

Savinski left his luggage at the customs and went away to wait for the car. A quarter of an hour later, they were rolling slowly over the drifted snow of the road in the direction of Petrograd.

Savinski's companion was an intelligent and agreeable man. He had kept his position in order to avoid dying of hunger and, besides, he could render at the frontier many services to his old friends. Moreover, when he should have had enough of it, he would cross over the famous wooden bridge that separates Finland from the Russian Empire. They had a long conversation in French, to avoid being understood by the soldier who was driving the car. Savinski thus heard news that interested him deeply. The official, by a fortunate chance, was very exactly informed as to the strength and the plans of the Communist party in Finland. He had not the slightest doubt that the Bolsheviks of Finland had found support in money and in arms in Russia; emissaries

of Lenine and Trotski were constantly going back and forth between Helsingfors and Petrograd. According to very certain information that he had, one might expect in the second week of January, a coup d'état of the extremists which would overturn the feeble bourgeois Government. The official had no doubt of its success.

All this gave Savinski a good deal to think about. He had his family in Finland. What safety would there be for them if the Reds were in power? Ought he not to send them to some other country? But would Sonia consent to go without him . . . ? Then, too, he had very considerable sums in several banks in Helsingfors. He must get them out, for the banks of Finland would meet with the same fate as those of Russia.

At the commissariat of Foreign Affairs, he had the good fortune to meet Semeonof in the corridor. The Bolshevist leader received him most cordially and asked in what way he could be of use to him. Savinski explained to him that he had been held up at the frontier of Finland. Semeonof immediately grew serious.

"We are not giving any more visas," he said. "There have been flights. People have been taking advantage of the disorder in the bureaus of Finland where, as you know, we keep our agents, to cross over into Sweden."

"But I have no intention of going to Sweden," said Savinski sharply.

"I do not suspect it," replied Semeonof with the

suggestion of a smile. "I am persuaded that you have excellent reasons for not leaving Petrograd. . . ."

He paused a moment and went on in a slightly different voice,

"Were it only to continue your useful interviews with Lamshof."

"He knows everything that I do," thought Savinski. "There was an allusion to Lydia in the first part of that remark."

A feeling of anger rose in him, but he controlled it and said insistently,

"I assure you that I will not go away. But I have the gravest reasons for going to Finland where my wife and children are. I intend to send them to England for the education of my son, and I am sure that you will not refuse to visa their passports for me."

"Yes," said Semeonof, "I understand that, at the moment, the English schools are better than ours."

He considered a little.

"I will give you your visa, Nicolas Vladimirovitch, yes, I will give it to you, and, if you will bring me back the passport of your wife and children, I agree to visa it for leaving Finland. . . . But, is it not so, we are talking here as man to man; may I have your promise that you will return to Petrograd during the first days of the year? We have things to talk about, you see; a conversation with a man of your worth is always of value to me."

Savinski, very much annoyed, gave the promise

demanded. The same evening, he was with his family and reassured Sonia, whose anxiety had been great when he did not come in the morning.

He had great trouble in persuading her to give him her passport to get the visa for leaving.

"I do not want to leave Finland," said Sonia with vigor. "It is much now that I consent not to return to Petrograd with you. If we are going, let us go together. Why do you not stay here? We will try our luck at Abo."

Savinski urged the promise that he had made to return to Petrograd. Besides, the relations that he had with Semeonof put him out of reach of all danger. Then, too, who knew what the Germans were going to do? Perhaps in a month they would occupy Petrograd and bring at least order and security. Meanwhile, since the situation in Finland might any day become dangerous, he begged his wife, for the safety of their children, to go and wait for him at Stockholm. A man alone could always find a way to get there, even if he had to cross the frontier by night. Sonia at last allowed herself to be convinced, but, in spite of the control that she had over herself, she could not hide her sadness.

The second of January, Savinski took her with him to Helsingfors, where he had to see his bankers. There he put everything in order. They dined together at the Hotel Kemp. Sonia remained grave, and Savinski tried in vain to cheer her. These last hours passed with the one who had been the faith-

ful companion of his life, weighed heavily upon his mood, also. He was going back to Petrograd. What would become of him? Never had the future been so uncertain. Even the image of Lydia was obscured. How would he find her again? Was it not the part of wisdom to stay with his family? He could not shake off the somber presentiments that beset him. And when he left the next morning for Petrograd, the parting was heart-rending for both of them.

Lydia, that evening, was awaiting the return of Savinski. He should have been back that day, late perhaps. He had thought that he might even be there the night before. What was keeping him in Finland? Lydia was walking up and down her room. At times, her brows drew together, lines etched themselves on her pure forehead. She could not make up her mind to go to bed. She knew that sleep would not come. So she went from the window to her bed and from her bed to the window. Above Peter and Paul, the stars were shining bright in the winter sky. So great a calm up there, so deep a trouble in that little room . . . ! She stopped at last; she was tired, she would have liked to die. And suddenly the expression of her face changed. She murmured,

"Yes, I will do it."

Her eyes shone, her mobile face took an expression of triumph.

"I will do it," she said again, white lids drooping over the blue pools of her eyes.

She had regained calmness. Slowly she undressed, went to bed, and fell asleep at once,—for, whatever the violence of the tempest that had shaken her, she was only eighteen, and, at that age, there are no griefs that night does not quiet.

XVI

A TELEPHONE CALL

THE next morning, in the gray light of the winter day coming through her windows, she did not dare to look her decision in the face; she only threw it sidelong glances, as if in passing. Yes, the thing that she had decided was still there before her; it had not changed at all; she was not going back on the decision that she had made. But it was better not to stand looking at an end so dazzling that it blinded you. She was certain to arrive at it some day. But when, how . . . ? It was impossible to foresee, to make any plan. Meanwhile, she had a very pleasant feeling of peace with herself. She was enjoying a delightful repose.

The nurse Katia, a little bent, was coming and going in the room.

"Yet she is not old," thought Lydia. "She is not fifty. How quickly women age! They have a few years to enjoy, and then that is the end. . . ."

"Katia, Katia," she called, "why do you stand bent like that?"

Katia came toward her. She shook her head.

"I have got pains, my little dove."

As she spoke, she smiled and her wide mouth showed gums where a number of teeth were missing.

"How many teeth have you left?" asked Lydia with interest, lying back in her bed, her hands behind her head.

"Why, I do not know, my little soul," said the nurse, "I have never counted them. I have enough left for what I have to do with them."

"Well, I, I have twenty-eight, Katia; they are strong and I can bite very hard, if I want to. Look."

She bared one of her arms, brought it to her mouth, which she opened wide, and bit the tender flesh with force. When she let go of it, the marks of two rows of even teeth could be seen in little red squares on the white skin.

"But you are wild, Lydotchka, this morning."

And the nurse, taking the arm of her mistress, rubbed it gently.

"Listen, nurse," said Lydia, "tell me the story of Ivan the Simple, but just from the time when he comes to the castle where the Princess is imprisoned. There is a passage there that I like very much. You know, when the daughter of the King is on the tower looking toward the east. You remember the words?"

"It goes this way," said Katia: 'Ivan, having gone farther along the road, saw before him a rich palace of gold and crystal, from which was coming a divine music that plunged him into an ecstasy. He discovered that, on the top of the highest tower, a young girl of marvellous beauty was playing a lute. She was looking attentively in the direction in which Ivan was, for her old nurse, as she was dying, had said to her, "Do not weep. Do not grieve. From

down there (motioning with her hand toward the east) will come a man, bold glorious, and Russian, who will deliver you. . . .'"

"Nurse," broke in Lydia abruptly, "how old was Ivan the Simple when he married the King's daughter?"

"It does not say in the story, my child. He was very young, no doubt. Perhaps he was twenty."

"Twenty," said Lydia vehemently, "twenty! To marry a man of twenty! It is horrible! . . . I had never thought of it when you were telling me the story. . . . And now I do not like it any more."

That same day, at five o'clock, Savinski came to see her, after having called on the Prince. She received him, this time, in a little room just off the drawing-room, where her mother and General Vassilief were talking gravely about trifles. They could hear the continuous murmur of their voices, which mingled with the monotone chant of the samovar.

Even before meeting, Lydia and Savinski were both restless and nervous. Savinski, since the incident of a few days before, had the feeling that he was walking on dangerous ground; but he had nothing to help him to recognize the places where he must not step. He dreaded a fresh flare of temper from Lydia. How could he avoid it? He was still thinking of that at the very moment of seeing her again. When he was face to face with her, however, the joy of seeing her again swept every other thought from his mind. However, he avoided all mention of

Finland and of the approaching departure of his wife. It seemed to him that he had grasped that any reference to a journey was unendurable to his friend. Was it perhaps because she knew that she herself could not leave Russia?

Lydia, for her part, was at first her charming self. She told Savinski the thousand trifles of her life while he had been away. Of Lord Douglas, there was not a word. They talked lightly for a while of various things. Little by little, however, an uneasiness rose between them. Savinski was quick to notice it. They seemed, both of them, to be driven by a touch of fever; there was a hint of affectation in the almost indifferent tone that Lydia had taken, and he felt beneath that calm surface a current of secret and stormy thoughts. There were certain silences, certain looks that were instantly averted, an occasional quick turn of the head, two hands that could not be still.

Perceiving these signs of nervousness in the young girl, Savinski himself grew troubled. In his turn, he betrayed agitation, restlessness. Finally, unable to stand it any longer, he rose. Lydia rose, also, without thinking. He came close to her, took both her hands in his, and said to her,

"What is the matter, Lydia Serguevna? What is it? Am I not your friend? Do you no longer trust me? I do not understand at all. . . ."

She looked long at him, without answering. Her eyes had a disturbing fixity, and suddenly Savinski saw them fill with tears.

He could not endure the sight. Without thinking that they might be seen from the next room, he gathered Lydia in his arms and, beside himself with distress, murmured to her those broken phrases with which one comforts the grief of women and children.

"Lydia, Lydotchka, my dear little Lydia, I beg of you. . . . Calm yourself. Come, come, why this great grief? You are crying! Is it because you know that tears make you more beautiful than ever . . . ? There, there, that is better. . . . Tell me what troubles you. . . . No, no, do not cry any more. . . . I can not bear it. Truly, if you cry, I shall begin crying myself. See, now, what a fine sight we should be. . . ."

Talking to her thus softly in caressing words, he held her closer to him, and, even as, deeply troubled, he sought to comfort her, the contact of that flexible and lovely body gave him a strange sensation of pleasure from which he found it hard to tear himself away. The warmth of Lydia, her fever, seemed to have passed into him and to be running through his veins. The emotion was so keen that he nearly lost his head. He had still strength, however, to put the young girl gently from him and seat her in a big chair.

In the next room, the murmur of voices continued to babble like the water of a brook flowing down a steep slope.

Lydia dried her eyes and drew a long breath. The crisis had passed. Soon she could speak again.

"You are kind, Nicolas Vladimirovitch," she said.

"You must forgive me once more. . . . I do not know why I am so nervous lately. . . . Do not think that I am a little girl. I have pondered many things; I have thought long, too long. . . . That is what has upset me, but I think that it is over now and that I shall never again be ridiculous as I have been today."

"Yes, yes," said Savinski quickly, "we are all sick, you see, Lydia Serguevna; it is the times in which we live that do that. I, myself, I am appalled when I see what I would be capable of. . . . Let us forget what has just happened, but, if you are feeling well enough, can you confide to me the cause of your grief?"

The young girl reflected for a moment.

"I think," she said, "that I can tell you the real trouble. . . . I do not know why it seized me so suddenly, but I had the horrible sensation that I was alone in the world."

Savinski started and was about to reply. She was before him.

"You will tell me that I have my parents," she said. "But, Nicolas Vladimirovitch, my parents have lived their lives. Mine is before me and I can not see clearly; I see nothing, a great isolation and, beyond, the void. It is a frightful thought. . . ."

She stopped, and Savinski remained silent for a long time. What had he to give to this quivering young girl? Could he be the companion of that child through life? He was so much older. He was not free. He had nothing to offer her. The sense of his

powerlessness to assuage that sorrow overwhelmed him.

"Dear little girl," he said at last, "you are very young. One must have patience. Things will not always be like this. To go through this difficult time, you know that you can count on me, that I am your friend. That is nothing much, obviously, but still . . ."

Lydia interrupted him quickly.

"I know all that, I know that you love me truly. But, you also, your life is settled, you have your wife, your children. . . ."

And again she seemed overwrought. Savinski, crushed, could find no answer.

Just then, the Princess crossed the drawing-room and spoke to Savinski. Dinner was about to be served. Would he stay and share with them a mediocre repast of the revolution?

Savinski expressed his regrets. He could not bear now to be with Lydia in company. His intimacy with her had gone so far that only talking with her alone gave him any pleasure.

When he saw Lydia again, she seemed to have forgotten the emotional scene that had brought them nearer together. The only difference that Savinski could detect was a shadow of something more serious in her whole manner, something a little more headstrong, as if she had chosen a course of action to which she was determined to keep. Of Lord Douglas there was no further question between

them. Of Finland, he spoke only once, without mentioning his wife or his children, just to say that he had still matters to arrange there. The news that was coming from there was bad. One had the impression that it was the eve of a crisis. Lydia let these explanations go without making any reply.

Several days followed when they could not go out together. Then, one morning—they had not met the day before—Lydia called him by telephone. At first, he had some difficulty in recognizing her voice. The quality of it had changed, and the accent. He told her so and asked the reason. She answered in a more natural tone. She was not free that afternoon, but if he was dining at home that evening, she would telephone to him about seven o'clock and talk with him a little.

"I am dining alone at home," said Savinski, "and I shall be waiting for your telephone call. But how shall I pass the day without seeing you?"

"Oh, well," replied Lydia, "we shall see each other tomorrow, Nicolas Vladimirovitch. Until this evening, then; I shall have something to tell you."

Again her voice became grave. Savinski wished to continue the conversation, but found that Lydia had already hung up the receiver.

XVII

"IN SUCH A NIGHT AS THIS"

—The Merchant of Venice

SAVINSKI returned home before six o'clock. He was tired and depressed. He had tea brought and then lay down on the divan, giving way for few moments, without repression, to the course of his thoughts. They took him into a world where the air was heavy, where the least action required the greatest effort, where one seemed to be crushed by the weight of a fear of one knew not what, that was a thousand times more difficult to endure than the sight of a real danger, however great.

One had the feeling of approaching a catastrophe, by a road bordered with high and thorny hedges that prevented you from seeing either in front or at either side and that came together behind you as you went forward. Some force, irresistible yet without brutality, impelled you to take each day one step more along this way at the end of which an abyss yawned before you. The idea of a dark fatality which weighed upon him, as upon all Russia, was crushing Savinski to the earth that day. He had moments like that, when he could not get a grip on

himself, when he was the defenseless prey of the demons of the night. At the moment he was passing through one of these crises.

A visit that he had received from Semeonof had contributed to putting him in that grievous state. Semeonof had come to see him regarding the interviews that he had been having with old Lamshof, but had he not managed in the course of the conversation and in speaking of the reactionary army of the Don, to bring in unexpectedly the name of Spasski and to say in so many words,

"We know that he has correspondents in Petrograd."

He had, of course, gone on to something else at once. But the blow had struck home, and, as a stone thrown in a pool forms there larger and larger circles, so the perturbation that he had caused in Savinski had spread little by little until it had touched regions that had never before been disturbed. From one day to another, he might be arrested as an accomplice of Spasski in his counter-revolutionary work. He was at the mercy of a chance or a betrayal. Some member of the party might find his nerves too weak for a moment and, under the domination of fear, go and sell himself to the Bolsheviks.

One did not jest with the masters of Smolni. How many summary executions had they not made? The ravelins of Peter and Paul, the ditches of Cronstadt, the very court of the Prefecture on the Gorokhovaia could tell the story. For the first time in a long period, there were men of energy in power now. The

men of the Don, those officers without will power, those generals disputing among themselves, could they overturn them? Savinski, in the mood that he was in, had not the shadow of a hope of it.

"But in that case," he said to himself, "am I not mad to risk my liberty and possibly my life for a cause which is just, certainly, but of the defeat of which I have no more doubt than I have of my presence in this room? That one should sacrifice himself when one believes in the success of the undertaking, agreed; but when one is certain of failing, that sacrifice is the act of visionaries, of mystics, of dreamers. I am not a mystic, nor a dreamer; I am a man of business. Why did I embark on this adventure? In the last analysis, if I am willing to confess the truth, solely because Spasski is a charming lad and I have sympathy for him; but it must be admitted that it is a sympathy that may cost me dear."

At the same time, Savinski realized beyond the shadow of a doubt, that he should never have the strength to break with Spasski, and that realization added momentarily to his bad temper.

"The devil take him," he said, getting up.

He lighted a cigarette and looked at his watch. Almost half past six. Why did not Lydia telephone? Lydia! What was he to her? She would never see anything but a friend in him. No doubt he was capable of playing this secondary part. He would suffer in doing it certainly and, in the end, she would go away on the arm of some young man. Here, again, he could not hope for any success. But here,

again, he knew that he would find in himself neither the desire nor the power to part from her. He foresaw long suffering, but suffering caused by Lydia was dearer to him than joy given by any one else.

"Ah, all that is absurd," he sighed, "and I am growing irrational. But things are as they are, and not for anything in the world would I wish them otherwise."

His somber revery was interrupted by the entrance of the maid. This maid, who had taken the place of the servant who had judged it more prudent to leave Petrograd, was a woman already of mature age, with a kind and peaceful face. Savinski had grown accustomed to Annushka, who took excellent care of him. She often spoke to him of his children, whom she had never seen, or his wife either, but whose photographs she saw on his desk. Boris was her favorite. She looked at her master, seated on the divan. He appeared worn out.

"You are tired today, *barine*. Shall I give you dinner a little early?"

Savinski shrugged his shoulders.

"As you like, Annushka, I am not hungry."

"It is not good to live alone in such times as this, *barine,*" she said gently. "Come, I will give you dinner very soon. That will do you good."

She went over and laid a hand on the stove.

"You will not be cold tonight," she said. And she went out with an air of content.

As she went, Savinski heard the bell of the entrance door. His nerves were so on edge that he

shivered. What new trouble was this? He was on the point of calling to the old servant that he was not in to any one, but she was already at the door. He was too late.

He waited a few instants, his head bowed. A sound of light steps on the carpet. He looked up. Lydia stood before him.

She had kept on her fur coat. She stood very straight, her head thrown back a little and her eyes on Savinski, and so great was his emotion that he did not see the confusion that she was trying to hide. She was the first to regain her self-possession, and to Savinski, who was still standing motionless as if stupefied by this apparition, she said in a voice that did not tremble,

"Well then, Nicolas Vladimirovitch, is this the way you greet your guests? Is it thus that you receive the first visit that I have ever made you?"

"Lydia Serguevna," he said, "forgive me. . . . I do not know whether I am dreaming. I was lost in thoughts of a frightful gloom. And here you are . . . !"

He had taken the two hands that she held out to him and stood very close to her. The fragrance of youth had filled the room where, a few moments before, he was sitting alone in the chill of despondency. The heat from the stove seemed stronger, the lights more brilliant.

"It is you," he went on, "in my house . . . ! And I leave you standing; I do not even ask you to be seated, I offer you nothing. . . . But I hope that

you can stay a few minutes. . . . I will take you home presently. Take off your wrap, Lydia Serguevna, you will be cold when you go out. You see, I have a very small apartment, but it is warm in it, as in the blessed time of the Czars."

He took her fur coat and was surprised to find that Lydia was wearing a low-cut evening gown, such as he had seen her wear at Nathalie's receptions.

"Have you been dining somewhere?" he asked. "With your neighbor, no doubt?"

With a trace of confusion, Lydia said, without daring to look at him,

"I had thought, Nicolas Vladimirovitch, that today you would invite me to dinner . . . if I do not inconvenience you, of course. Perhaps you have work to do . . . ? Tell me frankly and I will go away at once. . . ."

She seemed again to have lost confidence in herself; she was once more just a little girl, and Savinski saw that she was blushing.

"Ah," he said, "what good fairy are you to make me such a gift? Will I keep you . . . ! What do you think about it?"

He was longing desperately to take her in his arms and comfort her, to make her feel the joy that she was bringing him. But the confusion of his thoughts was so great that he dared not make a move. He did not know what to do, what manner to take. He moved away abruptly.

"I must warn my old servant," he said. "There is a good dinner, from what she has told me."

He hurried into the serving-pantry. When he came back, Lydia had not moved from the place where she stood, but she had regained her self-possession and smiled at him.

"Your apartment pleases me," she said.

"It is the apartment that the Princess Dolly R. . . had," said Savinski. "I believe that it was she who put up these old toiles de Jouy that are so gay. As you have seen, I am next the barracks and my immediate neighbors are those Pavlovtzi who make up the worst regiment in Petrograd. What is there to prevent their coming into my house and installing themselves here at my table and in my bed? I have no idea. I find it very amiable of them to stay in their quarters, for if they took the notion to change their lodgings, I could only surrender mine to them without a word. Semeonof himself could do nothing about it."

Lydia had risen and was walking around the room. She came to a double doorway, the doors of which had been taken off and which led to the room where Savinski slept. A great bed stood in the middle of the room, the bed of a woman of elegance, for it was covered with a spread of lace and silk.

Lydia turned back to the study. She glanced at the desk, on which, in a silver frame, was a photograph of Sonia with her children about her. She looked at it a long time.

"Your wife is beautiful," she said at last.

"But do you not know her?" said Savinski in surprise.

"I have never seen her," answered Lydia. "Is this an old photograph? Your wife is still very young.

"Sonia," said Savinski, "how old is she? Thirty-two, I believe. She married at eighteen."

"That is my age," said Lydia in an altered voice.

She stood for a moment without speaking. Savinski, also, was silent. Again he had that impression that some mysterious thing had sprung up between them. But he did not linger seeking the cause of it. The joy that he felt in seeing Lydia in his apartment dominated every thought and filled him with an intoxication that left room for no other feeling.

She was there, radiant with youth and loveliness: just the imperceptibly rhythmic movement of her hips as she walked, the way in which she straightened her youthful figure and flattened her slim shoulders, the faint movement of her breasts when she breathed, the way the air was drawn in and breathed out between her lips, the depths of her eyes and their azure color that evoked the skies of the Orient, and the blond twist of her hair, fine and golden, that seemed to give back to the light the gleam that the light had given it, made up a vision from which he could not tear his eyes away. There was no need of speaking. What was the use? She was there, glowing with life, beside him. What more could he ask?

The old Annushka came in. She looked at her master, who had not noticed her entrance. He had grown ten years younger. She had left a worn-out man, almost an old man. And here she found a man

strong, vigorous, with sparkling eyes and a face radiant with happiness. It was in a voice full of kindness that she said,

"*Barine,* the dinner is served."

At the table, she placed the chair for the young girl and showed her a special deference, and, when Lydia thanked her, she bowed very low. Then, having served the soup and the *pirochki,* she went out.

"Your servant is nice," said Lydia.

"She is a good woman," replied Savinski. "She takes the best care of me."

"I think that I shall like her very much," said Lydia.

Savinski started. What did Lydia mean? Had he understood her rightly . . . ? From this word, Savinski felt that he was less and less master of himself. At times, he pulled himself up and studied the situation calmly. Lydia had had the caprice to come to see his apartment and to invite herself to dinner, an impossible thing in other times, but natural enough in that day when the whole world was upside down. The very friendly relations that existed between them explained a step that was daring only in appearance. It sufficed, moreover, to look at the young girl sitting opposite him, to understand at once the simplicity and the innocence that were in her. "There is nothing but purity in my daughter," the old Prince had said. . . . He was right; everything ought to be considered from that angle.

At other moments, however, these wise reflections

were rudely jostled by an assault of tumultuous thoughts. There remained only one reality: the woman that he adored had come to his house; she was there within reach of his arms; she knew—it was not possible that she did not know—the feeling that he had for her, which had long ago passed the bounds of friendship. . . . He would come close to her. . . . He would bend toward the half-opened flower of her mouth and put his lips to it. . . .

While he was thus torn between two feelings, sometimes letting himself be swept away by the passionate dreams that Lydia's presence stirred in him, sometimes reflecting calmly on so unexpected a situation, of which he must enjoy the least delights because the meeting would be brief and would not occur again, the conversation went on idly between Lydia and himself. The novelty of this tête-à-tête, the glass of champagne that she had drunk, had brought her to herself and freed her from the preoccupations that had troubled her for the past few days, preoccupations of which Savinski had seen the reflection still on her pure forehead before dinner.

Savinski was impressed with the charming naturalness with which she adapted herself to this new position. She showed neither embarrassment nor a too great confidence. The little girl who sometime reappeared in her had disappeared. He had at his table a young woman who manifestly was untroubled by anything extraordinary that there might be about her presence in this dining-room. It almost

seemed that she was the mistress of the house, and when Savinski, far more troubled than she, neglected to eat, it was she who urged upon his attention the plate forgotten on the table.

Savinski, if he ate little, drank still less. He felt himself in so unstable an equilibrium that the least thing might make him lose his head. He took hardly a glass of champagne. The presence of Lydia was intoxicating him more surely than wine, and he spent his time swearing to keep his self-control; for it was not a woman that he had opposite him, a beautiful woman accustomed to the homage of men and also to their brusqueries, who knows what chance she is taking when she goes to dine at a man's house; it was a young girl in the morning of life, whose breath was as fresh as the wind that comes before the dawn, a pure friend who was granting him the favor of coming to pass an hour with him under circumstances that only his own imagination rendered romantic. On the whole, in the midst of the delights that the presence of Lydia wakened, he felt horribly embarrassed by the struggle that was going on within him.

That embarrassment increased when they went into his study. At the table, their positions had been exactly fixed,—there are the rules and a tradition. In the salon, they were free again, and Savinski did not know what to do with his liberty. Lydia, for her part, retained a greater simplicity. She seated herself on the divan, leaned back lightly against the cushions, and lighted a cigarette. Her eyes followed

Savinski, and it seemed to amuse her to watch him coming and going without finding repose. At first, he sat down beside her. Then, suddenly, as if some devil impelled him, he had bounded to the other end of the room on the pretext of looking for matches, when there was a box there on the table beside the divan. Coming back, he had dropped into a chair near her, and, then, with what sweetness he had talked to her!

At that moment, perhaps without even realizing it, he wanted to please her, to win her, to make her conquest. His eyes seemed trying to read through her, to penetrate even to her heart, and, beneath the caress of that look, Lydia herself gradually lost her sense of reality; her thoughts floated before her like dust clouds blown by the wind; nothing was left her but sensations; it was a delicate and delightful intoxication. She did not come to herself even at an abrupt movement on the part of her friend. Savinski, without apparent reason, had begun walking up and down the room, drawing swift puffs from his cigarette, silent and then letting escape, in the midst of the long silence, a word sprung from the inner monologue to which he had given himself up,

"Impossible."

The word resounded in the room and made Savinski himself jump.

He turned toward Lydia, smiled at her, and said,

"Forgive me, I think that I have lost my head. . . ."

But he stopped, and the smile died on his lips, so astonished was he at the young girl's expression. She was pale and her eyes remained fixed on Savinski. He saw only those eyes, dark in the shadow. She was looking at him, but did she see him? She seemed carried away by a dream uncounted leagues from the present scene. Even the word "impossible", when it had burst out in the room, had not reached her ears. But always those intense eyes, as if consumed by an inner fire. He went up to her, and, as he hesitated, seeking for words, she said to him simply,

"Are you not tired of walking, Nicolas Vladimirovitch? Sit down beside me. . . . It seems that I frighten you, tonight."

She held out a hand which he took and kept in his own; then he sat down and raised it to his lips, and his lips mounted to the wrist, crossed it, came to the bare arm, and ran over it from the wrist to the shoulder, and from the shoulder to the wrist. It was a sensation at once exquisite and torturing, of which he asked himself how long it could be prolonged with impunity.

Suddenly he felt Lydia's free arm find its way around his neck, drawing him down to her as she lay back among the cushions of the divan. When he was very near her, she flung herself against his breast and, turning her face to his, she gave him her lips. It seemed endless. A minute . . . ? A century . . . ?

He had a flash of lucidity.

"What time is it? She must go home. . . . But

then, no, no, it is impossible. . . . Yet, the old Prince . . . a young girl. . . ."

He tore himself from Lydia's arms. Again he was the prey of a great agitation. He seemed to be thinking now of only one thing. He pulled out his watch. Ten o'clock already.. . . Ah, there would no longer be any one in the streets. . . . He went quickly to Lydia and knelt before her, caressing her and saying to her a thousand wild and tender things, and he ended in a more serious tone,

"I am going to take you back to your home, Lydia, Lydotchka; it is late; they will be anxious, they will be searching for you. . . . By the way, where do they think that you are?"

"With my friend Helene, on the Mokhovaia," said Lydia, and she added, weighing each one of her words,

"It is there that I am supposed to sleep, for you know that it is not pleasant to go about Petrograd at night. It is there, then, that you will accompany me, if you really can not decide to keep me with you until tomorrow. . . ."

. . . . . .

Far in the night, it was already two in the morning, the light was burning above the great bed on which they lay. Drooping with fatigue, Lydia lifted herself up and, bending over her lover who lay beside her, looked deep in his eyes and said:

"O you who are mine, you will not go to Finland any more, now!"

She slipped down into his arms and fell asleep.

XVIII

THE AWAKENING

NIGHT, repose, two breathings alternating in the silence of the night. But for the light, rhythmic sound of those breaths, one might believe that there was no life in the two bodies lying there, so deep was the sleep in which they were lost. Darkness enveloped them and, like a mother, lulled her children. They were sleeping, side by side. . . .

All at once, however, Savinski was conscious of a strange sensation across his eyes, something irritating and bothering; he half opened his eyelids, shut them again quickly, and then opened them. . . . The room was flooded with light; the ceiling lamp was turned on, and beside him was the old Annushka touching his shoulder.

"*Barine,* there is a searching party here," she murmured in his ear.

Instantly, as by a flash of lightning, Savinski saw the immediate future open before him: the abyss. A search, a warrant of arrest, Lydia compromised in the affair, arrested perhaps, dragged into prison with him, that child in the horrible promiscuity of the Bolshevist jails! And, besides, the fearful scandal that would re-echo from all sides, reaching the

old Prince, farther yet into Finland where Sonia was awaiting him. . . .

"I will get up," he said in a low voice to Annushka.

Lydia was still sleeping. Nothing could disturb her sleep of innocence. She was lying straight and slim, her right arm beneath her head, her loosened hair in disorder about her; one frail shoulder had slipped bare from a dainty garment that, falling back, left a glimpse of a young breast delicately flowered. Savinski, while he dressed hastily, looked at her. Anguish tore his heart. . . . Had he been alone, the adventure would have been dangerous enough, but to mix that child up in it! Should he waken her . . . ? Could he avoid their arresting her . . . ? But, in any case, the commissioner in charge of the search would come into the room. He went up to her, bent over the bed and took her in his arms, kissing her forehead and her lips. She returned his kisses, murmured without opening her eyes an "I love you," and wanted to snuggle down and go to sleep again.

"Lydia," said Savinski, "Lydia, my little love, you must wake up. . . ."

The young girl's head turned on the pillow; she opened her eyes and asked,

"What is it? Is it late already?"

She looked at the windows, which remained dark.

"But it is still night," she said; "you must let me sleep."

"My dear heart," said Savinski, "there is a search

here. You must get up. . . . I hope that all will go well; in any case, you are not in any danger. Put on your clothes, I have to go in the other room. . . . I will see you again in a few minutes."

He drew her close against his breast, and she clasped her arms around his neck as if she could not let him go. Savinski loosened them gently and went out of the room. As he passed through the study, he looked at his watch. It indicated four o'clock. He had all his coolness with him.

"The devil take people who choose such an hour to search one's dwelling," he said to himself.

He entered the dining-room. There were in it a dozen persons, nearly all of them Red Guards in soldiers' uniform, with bayonets on their guns, and two of them in civilian clothes. He recognized the president of the house-committee, an architect with a thin moustache and a pallid skin, who had his offices on the court. The second man in civilian clothes left the group, came over to Savinski, and introduced himself very politely.

"Alexandre Ivanovitch Zoubof, Commissioner of the Department of Search against Counter Revolution."

He held out to Savinski a yellow paper, stamped and bearing several seals. Savinski read it at a glance. It was an order to search the house of Nicolas Vladimirovitch Savinski and to arrest him, as well as all persons present in his apartment. . . . Thinking of Lydia, Savinski felt his legs giving way beneath him and had to make a great effort to

conceal his distress. He leaned against the table.

"I suppose that this paper is legal," he said. "But there is perhaps some mistake about it . . . ? Am I permitted to telephone to Leon Borissovitch Semeonof?"

The commissioner bowed and, in a very different tone of voice, replied,

"I fear, Nicolas Vladimirovitch, that it would be useless. You will doubtless be questioned in the course of the day at the Gorokhovaia, and then, if you consider it necessary, Leon Borissovitch can intervene. But we do not come under Foreign Affairs. . . ."

The commissioner had the manners of a well-bred man. He was probably some former member of the secret police of the Czar, entered into the service of the Bolsheviks. He was freshly shaven, wore a short mustache on a slightly pouting upper lip, and expressed himself with distinction. He was something under thirty. Savinski had for a moment the hope that he might be able to arrange the matter of Lydia with him. He would, without doubt, understand the situation, and he ought not to be insensible to the thought of putting a man like Savinski under obligation to him.

"I would like to talk with you a moment," he said to him in a low voice, "on a rather delicate matter."

The other man bowed.

"At your orders," he said, and he followed Savinski who led him toward the door of his study.

Just then a second man, this one in uniform, left

the group of soldiers and came to join them. The civilian commissioner, showing no embarrassment, presented him.

"Lieutenant Ivanof," he said.

Savinski, accustomed to looking at men and judging them, took his measure at a glance. He was correctly dressed and had the bearing of an officer of the regular army. He, also, was a young man. He stood straight, shoulders flattened. "He has belonged to the old army," thought Savinski, "I may yet succeed."

"Gentlemen," he said smiling, "it is on a personal matter that I wish to talk with you. You will understand presently. . . . It is not to the functionaries of the Government who are fulfilling their duty here. . . ."

"Very painful, I assure you, Nicolas Vladimirovitch, really very painful," interposed the civilian commissioner, bowing.

"Yes," resumed Savinski with more assurance, "it is to men that I am speaking, as man to man. . . . The fact is that I am here, today, in a rather specific situation. That might happen to any one of us, to you as well as to me. . . . I have a woman here, a very young woman who came to see me and whom I kept here tonight, for the streets are not very safe, as you know. She has no knowledge of politics, she is still a child. She is not yet twenty, you see. . . . Now, I can give you my word of honor that she is not in any way involved in my life, that she knows nothing of what I do, that this, today, is

in reality the first time she has ever been in my apartment. . . . My servants, if you will be good enough to question them on that point, will confirm the truth of what I am telling you. . . . This being so, I beg you, gentlemen, to let her go free. You understand, without my saying more, what the situation is. . . . And I assure you that I will never forget the service you will be doing me. . . ."

As he was speaking, he had gradually lost the coolness that he had in the beginning. The emotion that dominated him, vibrated in his voice.

The two commissioners seemed to share his feeling, the civilian even more than the soldier. While Zoubof nodded his head approvingly, the officer assumed a half smile that was almost respectful, as if to let it be understood that he, also, had known similar good fortune and these were matters to which a man who had lived might shut his eyes. Nevertheless, when Savinski had ended, a great embarrassment appeared on their faces. They stepped aside a moment and seemed to be debating. This went on some time. Evidently they had struck an obstacle difficult to surmount. They came back to Savinski.

"You could perhaps tell us the name of the person who is with you?" said the civilian commissioner with a shade of embarrassment.

"I should prefer to keep it secret," replied Savinski, "it is a question of the honor of a woman, you understand. . . ."

"At all events, we could question your servant,"

suggested Zoubof, who seemed very eager to give proof of his good will.

Annushka was summoned. The two commissioners put their questions to her. The old servant answered with simplicity and assurance. She had never before seen the young woman who had dined with her master. It was she, Annushka, who always opened the door. This young woman had never before come to the apartment.

This testimony appeared to impress the two commissioners. Still, when they were alone, they began debating again. Savinski felt, at that moment, certain that the matter was arranged. He breathed again. What was going to happen to him? He did not care. Only Lydia mattered. The commissioners came up to him again. This time it was the officer who spoke.

"It seems to us, Nicolas Vladimirovitch, that the question is, indeed, very delicate. Our order is most definite. . . . We should take a great responsibility in not carrying it out to the letter. . . . However, it may be that, to oblige you . . . in the actual circumstances . . . But it goes without saying, does it not, that you will keep it the greatest secret for us . . . ? No one must know of it, not even the soldiers who are here. . . ."

Through the open door, they could see the soldiers in the dining-room, and Savinski, drawing a great breath of relief, did not dare to clasp the hands of his companions.

At that very second, moroever, a new incident took place which, alas, changed the whole situation. Lydia came quickly into the study. She was frantic with anxiety and, for the quarter of an hour since she had finished dressing, she had been fretting to know what these consultations meant. Unable to stand it any longer, her heart torn with fear for him, she had decided to go and find her lover.

"What is happening? What are they trying to do to you?" she demanded, before Savinski, overwhelmed, could stop her.

It seemed to him that the earth was opening beneath his feet. The entrance of the young girl had created a sensation. The two commissioners, abashed, looked fixedly at her. Lydia's beauty, the brilliance of her eyes, the indifference that she showed for all the men gathered in the apartment, the single preoccupation that they read in her face for the fate of Savinski, left them stupefied with admiration. The solders themselves had come to the door of the study, and their curious looks did not for a moment leave the young girl.

"Very painful," murmured the commissioner Zoubof, when he came to himself, "very painful, in truth. . . . I fear," he said in a low voice to Savinski, who had been obliged to sit down on the table and who still held Lydia's hand in his, "I fear that we shall be compelled to execute our order in full."

Savinski did not answer. He felt Lydia's hand pressing his. It was a clasp that nothing could loosen. He felt that she would go with him to death itself.

The search began. The desk was ransacked. They found nothing. On that point, Savinski was at ease. There was not a compromising paper in his apartment. Moreover, now that Lydia was near him, he had regained calmness. He had the feeling of being present at a spectacle in which he had no part. His nerves, after so many shocks, were numb. He watched curiously the two commissioners pursuing their search. They appeared rather clumsy about it.

"They do not know their business," he thought at first. "The police of the old days worked better."

They did not find even the considerable sum in bank notes that Savinski had hidden under a corner of the carpet from which he had taken the tacks. There was a sum of more than a hundred thousand rubles in old notes. Looking at them more closely, however, he began to think that their clumsiness was a pretense. Yes, manifestly, they were pretending to search with zeal, that they might not be denounced by the Red Guards, but they also did not intend that Savinski should be deceived by it.

The byplay amused him for a moment.

All at once, an idea came to him. Perhaps he could still save Lydia, who was sitting close against him, her fresh breath light on his cheek.

"Gentlemen," he said, "have you at this hour a responsible chief at the Gorokhovaia with whom you could talk?"

"Without doubt, Nicolas Vladimirovitch, without doubt," replied Commissioner Zoubof. "Our chief, Comrade Ouritski, should be still at the Pre-

fecture. . . . As a matter of fact, most of our work is done at night."

"Very well, then, would you be so good as to explain to him by telephone the situation in which I find myself? The matter might be arranged in that way, and I should long remember your kindness. . . ."

The commissioners agreed, but the officer called his attention to the fact that they must give him the name of Madame. . . .

Lydia listened for a moment without succeeding in grasping what it was all about. There was a mystery that must be cleared up.

"You wish my name," she said to them, "here it is on an identification paper."

She held out to them an official paper on which appeared her name, her age, and her place of residence.

Zoubof went to the telephone and, in a twinkling, was in communication with the Prefecture on the Gorokhovaia. He began to explain Savinski's request. . . . When Lydia saw what the situation was, she rose at once, and, addressing her friend with great agitation, she said to him in a low voice,

"What, Nicolas, they are arresting you . . . ? I thought that it was only a search. . . . Are you in danger? What are they going to do with you?"

"It does not matter about me, dear little one," said Savinski. "Yes, they are going to take me to prison, but you know that that happens to many good men in these days; I shall be there two or

three days, then they will release me. That is of no consequence, but it is about you that I am concerned. The warrant is so stupidly expressed that every one in my apartment must be arrested too. And even though you should be set free almost immediately, I want to avoid your going to that horrible prison. . . ."

He got no further; already Lydia was aflame with excitement.

"Since you are going to prison, I shall go there with you. . . ."

A discussion began between them, Savinski trying to persuade her that she would be a thousand times more helpful to him by remaining free, but Lydia standing obstinately by the idea of not leaving him. While they talked in low tones, bits of Zoubof's conversation at the telephone could be heard:

"Yes, Comrade Ouritski. . . . I understand. . . . Eighteen years. . . . Ah, ah . . . ! charming, yes. . . . That is why I have permitted myself to call you. . . . "

And all at once he hung up the receiver, scratched his head, and turned to Savinski.

"Nothing to do," he said, "you must both go to the Gorokhovaia, but for you, Lydia Serguevna, it is probable that you will not have to stay there long."

He was much astonished to see that the young girl's face expressed the greatest possible satisfaction.

However, there was still the search to make in the other rooms of the apartment. The soldiers, tired of waiting, had gone into the kitchen. Weariness was gradually overcoming Savinski and Lydia. They were no longer talking. Savinski was lost in black thoughts; for the moment, Lydia with her youth was thinking only of struggling against sleep. The old Annushka, noticing it, took pity on the young girl and came over to her.

"I am going to prepare you some breakfast," she said. "You will not have much to eat down there. I have lighted the fire, the coffee will be ready in a minute. . . ."

She patted Lydia's arm and went back to her work. A few minutes later, she came back bringing hot coffee, bread and butter. Savinski invited the commissioners to have breakfast with them, and they thus improvised a morning meal. Lydia began eating bread and butter the moment that she was at the table. She drank, one after the other, two great cups of coffee. She was suddenly, without being able to explain why, so happy that her good humor grew contagious and caught Savinski from his preoccupation.

As for the two commissioners, they were radiant. Never before in the exercise of their duties, had they encountered such good fortune. The conversation, thanks to Lydia, was animated; there were at that table neither Bolshevist hunters nor bourgeois prey. There were only human beings brought together by the chance of life, who were finding it very agree-

able, after an almost sleepless night, to sit down at a table and refresh themselves.

However, they had to be going. It was after six. Before leaving the house, Savinski gave Annushka orders to telephone at nine o'clock to Semeonof to let him know that he was in prison at the Gorokhovaia.

"You will speak to him only of me," he told her.

They went out. Two soldiers were left in the house, to the great indignation of Annushka, who feared probable thefts.

An automobile was waiting at the door. It was still very dark and the cold was sharp. The two commissioners, with great politeness, put Savinski and Lydia inside the car and took their places on the driver's seat.

Across a city of the dead, they came in a few minutes to the Gorokhovaia.

XIX

AT THE GOROKHOVAIA

THE vestibule of the Prefecture on the Gorokhovaia was full of soldiers. Savinski and Lydia were led to a large room on the second floor.

Lydia, certain of not being separated from Savinski, had for the moment not a care in the world; the excellent breakfast that she had eaten before leaving the apartment had dissipated the fatigue of a night in which she had slept but little. She was now all curiosity. They found themselves in a very large room which must once have been one of the reception rooms of the Prefect. It had still a few armchairs and other upholstered pieces, covered with a pale blue silk, and on the floor was a modern machine-made carpet with colors already effaced.

In a corner of the room, behind tables arranged in a semicircle, two men of the staff were working. Before them, an accused man was standing. He was, to judge from his attire, what they called then a "bourgeois," sufficient grounds for classing him as a suspect. The men of the staff were slowly filling in blanks and forms and opening registers. The administrative order surprised Lydia, to whom it seemed not to accord with her idea of the proceed-

ings usual under the reign of Terror decreed by the Bolsheviks. And then, the quiet of that room, its rich and tranquil aspect, the lack of tragedy that there was in all that. She confided her thoughts to Savinski in a low voice.

He shrugged his shoulders and smiled.

"Bureaucracy will never die among us. Lenine will be powerless to destroy it. Even illegal acts will be done exactly according to form."

He was trying not to appear anxious, to show his freedom from care, in order not to alarm the young girl, and the effort that he was making in that direction was ending by having the best possible effect on his own mood.

Their turn came to pass before the functionaries in the corner of the room. These men multiplied the formalities of entering their names in the books. Savinski was obliged to turn over his pocket-book. The employes gave him a formal receipt for the money that it contained. Savinski, however, who had followed closely what had happened when the other "bourgeois" was incarcerated, had prudently slipped a few hundred rubles in the pocket of his trousers.

Two soldiers were waiting for them at the door. They were two Letts with hard, thin faces. They climbed a winding stairway, the well of which had openings looking down on the entrance vestibule. At each opening was a machine-gun pointed toward the door that opened on the Gorokhovaia and a soldier mounted on guard.

"How they fear an attack!" thought Savinski. "They do not feel themselves very firmly established."

They stopped before a little antechamber full of Red Guards. Their guides exchanged a few words with the head of the guardroom.

"It is full here," the man said with good humor.

On the fourth floor, the same answer.

On the top floor, at last, they were admitted to a little antechamber where five or six soldiers were smoking. At a table was seated a young man of barely twenty, a little Jew with a sullen and important air, with black hair, crinkly and upstanding, who had before him a register in which he was writing down the names of his guests. He took Lydia's name first and asked her for what cause she had been arrested. Lydia, who was looking him over with curiosity, replied in a clear voice and without the slightest embarrassment,

"I know nothing about it. If you will tell me, I shall be pleased."

The soldiers smiled, but the little functionary frowned.

"I think that you have been arrested for political reasons," he said gravely, "We shall put 'Counter Revolution'."

This time, one of the soldiers, a great loose-jointed devil who had not taken his eyes off that very lovely child, laughed outright.

"Search the prisoner," said the young ruffian in

a crabbed voice to the soldier standing beside him.

Savinski jumped and drew close to Lydia.

She turned toward him and, with a glance, begged him not to interfere. The soldier hesitated, looked at Lydia, shifted his feet, shrugged his shoulders, and finally said,

"There is no need of it, Leon Davidovitch. You can see well enough that it is only a child. . . ."

All the soldiers present showed by their faces that they approved the stand taken by their comrade. The little employé grew white with rage, but he did not dare to repeat his order. He grumbled a few unintelligible words, only the end of which could be heard.

". . . The order is express, I will do it myself."

He rose and came up to Lydia, and, as if for the form, he contented himself with tapping lightly against her fur coat at the level of her hips.

When Savinski had answered the questions that were put to him and they had made sure that he carried no revolver, one of the soldiers pushed open a glass door and they were led into the quarters destined for them.

It was a great square place, low ceiled and dimly lighted by an electric bulb hanging by a wire in the middle of the room. Through the single window, that looked out on a court, came a pale glimmer that announced the late but approaching arrival of dawn. An acrid, warm, and suffocating smell, made up of the breaths of those in the prison, of their sweat, of the leather of their boots, of the straw of their mat-

tresses, of the half-rotten planks of the floor, and of the rank smoke of cigarettes, stopped Lydia and Savinski at their first step and fixed them where they stood. The ordeal was even harder than Savinski had imagined. He felt the pressure of Lydia's arm on his, but she said nothing.

Meanwhile, their eyes were growing accustomed to the half-light that prevailed in the room, and the spectacle that it offered gripped their hearts. Camp beds, set one against another, filled the entire room, scarcely leaving a narrow passage clear in the middle and two alleys leading to doors opened in the partition at their left; on a table was lying a man wrapped in a military cloak that covered his head; only the tips of his worn boots were to be seen. On the camp beds, and sometimes even on the floor, men were lying about in a frightful disorder, often three of them occupying two beds.

The greater part of these prisoners were sleeping uneasily and moaning in their sleep; nervous tremors shook them, made them turn restlessly on their hard and narrow beds; arms waved in the air; feverish hands scratched necks bitten by vermin. Yet others, stretched on their backs, their mouths open, were rending the air with their snoring. In one corner, the red spark of a cigarette shone like some glowworm strayed into an infernal garden. A little hunchback, haggard, with frenzied face, sprang suddenly from his bed, ran to the light, pulled a notebook from his pocket, and nervously wrote a few

words in it. Then, throwing a suspicious look at the new arrivals, went back to his place.

At last Savinski saw, near the table, a bench on which there was room to sit. He led Lydia over there, sat down, and took her on his knees. She leaned close against him, kissing him gently without speaking. Again an insurmountable fatigue was overwhelming her. She fell asleep at once. When she awoke an hour later, it was already daylight, the gray, sad daylight of winter mornings in Petrograd, a daylight so pale that it made one regret the night. She opened her eyes and saw that she was in Savinski's arms. What were prison and its terrors to her? She smiled tenderly at her lover, whose grave and weary face lighted. He caressed gently the hand that the young girl laid on his breast.

Already the great room was waking up. Prisoners were rising from their beds; they seemed harassed and stretched themselves sighing. Many of them lighted a cigarette at once.

An hour of sleep had restored Lydia's freshness. She had regained complete tranquillity of mind and accepted gayly what she called an adventure.

"This time," she said laughing to Savinski, "I know at least one thing about the revolution, that is that it smells most unpleasantly."

People came up to them, and conversations began. The presence of Lydia created a sensation. She had kept on her fur coat, but, because of the heat of the room, she had unfastened it at the top, showing

the fresh beauty of her neck and breast above the slightly décolleté gown. It was as if some one had brought flowers into the infected air of a sick-room.

Savinski sought to learn the details of the life in the prison. The one thing that concerned him for the moment was to learn at what time they would be questioned, for it was essential that Lydia should be back in her home in time for luncheon. In that way, no one would know where she had passed the night. A dozen prisoners at once asserted that they had been there three, four, or five days, without having been summoned before Ouritski or knowing the reason for their arrest. An officer was talking with Lydia, a young man who laughed and joked. He had the air of adapting himself without trouble to the life in prison. She noticed with astonishment that his hands were shaking as he talked with her.

"How frightened he is," she thought.

The impression was disagreeable to her, but was merely a passing thought. She had within her a spring of happiness so abundant that nothing could exhaust it. She was not even thinking of the possibility of a long detention for Savinski. So many others had already been arrested in this fashion and released after a few days. The prisons of Petrograd, vast as they were, would never suffice to lodge half the population. . . . For the moment she was surrounded by friendly people who were all eagerness to please her; she had her lover at her side; she had no wish to look farther.

There was in that room the most amazing mix-

ture imaginable. Counter revolutionaries, who were officers of all ranks, a few notable bourgeois, then some speculators, a group of four men who had made a daring success by a corner in platinum; then the prisoners of the common law, crooks or ordinary thieves arrested in the streets. The aristocracy of that group consisted of a band of counterfeiters who had cleverly put in circulation some millions of counterfeit "Kerenski" notes. They had the air of being greatly satisfied with themselves and carried their heads high. A third, at least, of the prisoners were Bolsheviks arrested for peculations. A man who was very busy preparing tea with the aid of an alcohol lamp set on a table, brought a glass of it to Lydia, who accepted it with great pleasure. And, as she was about to drink it, he said to her,

"Wait, wait," and he drew triumphantly from his pocket an exceedingly dirty bit of sugar and announced,

"It is the very last one I have!"

Lydia did not dare to refuse it. She learned later from a man near her that the man with the sugar was a commissioner who had been sent to Siberia with money for the troops and had pretended that he had been robbed on the way.

Meanwhile, the head of the room came to present his respects to Savinski and Lydia. It was he who regulated the relations of the prisoners among themselves, determined the turns at fatigue duties and the order in which the prisoners went down to the wash-rooms, organized gangs for dealing out

the bowls of soup, and took down the lists of things to be purchased outside the prison by one of the Red Guards. This important personage was a man of barely thirty, with an energetic and pleasant face, red hair, and the bearing of a man of decision. He had held a position on the staff of the Red Army. One day four hundred thousand rubles had disappeared from his office and he had been arrested.

He took Lydia and Savinski on a tour of the domain over which he now reigned, and, as the prisoners were sweeping up the room, he conducted his new lodgers into a little room next it, where a dozen camp beds were crowded together. On one of these beds, a woman was lying holding in her arms a little girl of about six, who was still asleep. In the worn face of the mother one saw only concern for this little one, who was pale and sickly, like so many of the children who grow on the damp soil of Petrograd. Lydia talked in a low voice with the mother. She had been seized as a hostage, with her daughter, because her husband, who was accused of counter revolution, had succeeded in escaping. So long as he did not surrender, she would be kept there with her daughter. She had the air of being half crazed with grief.

"If he comes back," she said, "they will shoot him. . . . If he does not come, what will become of my child . . . ? She can not endure this imprisonment for long. See how thin she is!"

She turned back the cover. Lydia saw legs as slim

as flutes with knees and ankles making great bony lumps.

The head of the room said to Savinski,

"You will sleep here tonight, this is the bourgeois quarter."

Savinski sat down on a bed. He was exhausted. In the two hours since the prisoners had wakened, he had not been able to get a word with Lydia. The morning was advancing. It was nearly eleven. It was essential that he should talk alone with her. He feared the worst now, a long separation. The Bolsheviks would hold him. No doubt there had been some imprudence committed on Spasski's part. This was what he had been brought to by his sympathy for that counter revolutionary in whose success he had never believed. He cursed the ease with which he had let himself be dragged by his feelings into adventures that might take a tragic turn. It was unpardonable, for he was a man accustomed to business and to the most material side of life. To Lydia he could tell nothing of these preoccupations. He wanted to bring her to understand that she would be leaving him in a few hours. The thing was not easy. The young girl refused flatly.

"Where you are, I shall be. . . . I have only you in the world and, understand it, from now on you have only me."

It required long insistence before Savinski could succeed in demonstrating to her that she would be far more useful to him at liberty than in prison with him. Who would bring him food every morning, and

who would take steps to secure his release? He convinced her at last. But the young girl's eyes were full of tears.

"How you make me suffer!" she said. "But, alas, I see that you are right. . . ."

As she spoke, her name was called in a loud voice at the door of the room. An employé stood there waving a paper. Lydia rose.

"Follow me," he said, "You are wanted for examination."

A confusion of voices burst out in the room. One caught phrases here and there, "Never has any one been questioned so soon. It is a miracle!"—"We knew it well enough, you are going already!"—"Alas!" murmured another.

The moment of parting had come. Lydia flung herself on Savinski's neck and, oblivious of the prisoners who were all staring at her, kissed him passionately. She could not take her arms from him. It seemed as if this were the last moment of her life that she was passing in his arms. The employé at the door was won over by the general sympathy that was going out to the young girl. It was in a gentle voice and almost mechanically that he repeated,

"You must hurry, you must hurry!"

Suddenly Lydia had a new idea.

"I will see you again," she said, "even if they set me free."

Quickly she took off the fur coat that she was still wearing and left it in her lover's arms. And

then, dressed as for a ball, décolleté, radiant with freshness and beauty, straight and with her head thrown back after her fashion, she walked to the door, which closed behind her, leaving the spectators of the scene dazzled and holding their breath at that fleeting vision.

A quarter of an hour went by. Savinski could not think. Seated on a bench, his head in his hands, he remained as if asleep. He had no consciousness either of the passing of time or of the noise in the room. All at once there was an uproar. Lydia was coming back. She ran to her lover.

"I am free," she said. . . . "The man I had to deal with was very polite. He made excuses very courteously for the deplorable mistake through which I had been arrested. . . . He is going to question you at once. You are to go down with me. . . . But I am sure," she said, wild with excitement, "sure, you understand me, that he is going to set you free, too."

Joy radiated from her, and, as the employé called "Nicolas Vladimirovitch Savinski", Savinski followed the young girl who was showing him the way.

They were taken again to the big room to which they had come six hours before. There Lydia had a great disappointment. She was not given permission to accompany Savinski to the commissioner in charge of the examination. She must leave the prison at once. But the certainty of seeing him again in a few moments still filled her, and she left him without anguish.

A few seconds later, Savinski was face to face with the formidable Ouritski, whose fame already filled the city. Ouritski, who was seated before a large table on which lay a bundle of papers that he was consulting, rose at the entrance of the accused and came forward to shake his hand. He was a man of medium height, very thin, with an intelligent face, clean-shaven, quick and nervous in his movements, of a rather distinguished, but very accentuated, Semitic type. He had the air of being worn out with fatigue. He offered Savinski a chair and went back to the papers, which he looked over for some minutes. Those minutes seemed a century to Savinski. He could not endure this tension of uncertainty. What had they against him? Anything was preferable to waiting. Yet, at the same time, he was making a great effort to maintain his coolness. . . . This struggle with himself was harassing.

At last Ouritski took a bundle of papers, slipped a rubber band around them, and held them out to Savinski.

"Here are your papers," he said in a colorless voice. "I am giving them back to you. . . . I am going to set you free. (Savinski dropped his eyes that the joy in them might not betray him.) But, if you please, I shall first ask you, for the record, a few questions which you will have the kindness to write down, with your answers. . . ."

The ringing of the telephone interrupted him. The commissioner, with a weary gesture, took the re-

ceiver from one of the four telephones on the wall behind him, listened a moment, gave a curt order, and went on.

"Do you know Spasski?" he demanded.

"Yes," answered Savinski.

"Kindly write it."

"Have you had communication with him since November 7, 1917, by letter, by messenger, or in person?"

"No," answered Savinski.

"Kindly write it."

"Have you his present address?"

"No."

"Kindly write it."

The same questions were put regarding the commanding generals of the staff of the Army of the Don. Savinski's replies were all in the negative. Suddenly Ouritski, who was walking nervously up and down the room, stopped in front of Savinski and hurled at him point-blank,

"Do you know the engineer Mushine?"

Savinski hesitated momentarily, caught himself and answered in a curt voice,

"No."

Ouritski then took up the record and read it aloud.

"Kindly sign it," he said. "You are free."

He rose and bowed to him. Savinski turned toward the door. As he was about to open it, the colorless voice of Ouritski made him pause.

"It would be very unwise on your part, Nicolas

Vladimirovitch," it said, "to see Spasski again or to have any communication whatever with him, or with the engineer Mushine. That is good advice that I am giving you. . . . *Au revoir.*"

Savinski went out, but, while they were completing the formalities of the discharge, the last words of the commissioner still reechoed within him and chilled him.

"What insolence, to speak to me in that fashion!" he thought. "Could he give me to understand more clearly that he puts not the least faith in my declarations. . . . That man is playing with me. That story is not ended."

All his joy had vanished.

Only when he was out again on the sidewalk in front of the Prefecture, did he escape from the anguish that was throttling him anew. It was noon, of a clear winter day. The snow in the gardens of the Admiralty was shining in the sun. Coming out from the foul-smelling jail, he breathed deeply of the dry and icy air. He seemed to be for the first time in his life really capable of feeling the joy of a cold and radiant day.

"How good it is! How beautiful it is!" he repeated, motionless before the door of the building.

At that moment, a young girl stepped out of the doorway of a shop on the opposite side of the street and came over to him. It was Lydia.

He held her close against his heart.

"I am happy," he said, "I love you!"

They went back on foot along the Palace Quay. They felt that they had been through a troubled dream. The only reality was the radiant dawn of their love. A few minutes later, they parted in front of the house of Prince Volynski. They would meet again at the end of the day. . . . Where? They did not know yet. Savinski's apartment, was that still occupied by soldiers? And even if it was free, would it be prudent to meet there . . . ? All that would be arranged by telephone in the afternoon. They would see each other again. . . . What did the rest matter!

A BRIDGE IS BURNED

XX

THE old Annushka gave her master a touching welcome. The joy that she showed in seeing him again bore witness to the fear that she had felt in thinking him lost. The soldiers, recalled by a telephone order, had just left the apartment. There remained of them only the tenacious odor of their leather boots. While the cook was preparing the luncheon, Annushka made a bath ready, took off Savinski's shoes herself, and brought him a room robe.

"Thanks be to God," she said, "you are here in safety, *barine*. And that lovely young lady, too, I think."

"Yes," said Savinski, "thank God, she is safe."

Tears came into his eyes.

After he had eaten, an unconquerable weariness threw him down on his divan. He slept for a long time, a heavy sleep broken by frightful dreams. He saw the thin legs, the bony knees of a little girl in her mother's arms, and the little girl was sobbing, sobbing without end. . . . Then it was a man with a beaked nose, quivering, who leaped about him, executing a satanic dance. . . . And suddenly he

stopped, looked him in the eyes, and demanded in a colorless voice,

"Will you give me the address of Spasski?"

And all the time that he was speaking, the bells of four telephones behind him were ringing without intermission. The clamor with which they filled the room kept on and on, ringing in Savinski's ears as he lay nailed to the divan by the fixed eyes of the man with the beaked nose. . . . All at once, Savinski awoke; the bell of his telephone was calling, calling steadily. He hurried to answer it. A message from Semeonof requested him to come at about four o'clock to the commissariat of Foreign Affairs. He shivered and shook himself to get rid of the fragments of the nightmare still clinging to him. He looked out. It was already dark. He took out his watch. A quarter to four. He had just time to meet the appointment. But first he called Lydia's number. Where would she like to see him? He could not be home before five, and he might be late. But she would wait for him and Annushka would give her tea. The clear voice of Lydia at the other end of the line gave assent.

Twenty minutes later, Savinski was with Semeonof in the great Empire office in red and yellow, where more than once he had talked with M. Sazonof. He arrived there filled with resentment and apprehension at the same time. The impudence of Semeonof passed all bounds. To have him arrested in that fashion in the middle of the night, it was in-

tolerable. But the feeling that Semeonof belonged to a party that was both all-powerful and without scruples compelled him to restrain his resentment. He must still have patience.

Semeonof rushed to meet him. He seemed to have lost that icy reserve behind which he had always shut himself. He manifested a convincing wrath that his friend Savinski should have been arrested in that fashion and taken to prison. That was some of the imbecility of an independent commission that was working blindly and wanted to show its zeal. Informed by Annushka at nine o'clock, he had not lost a moment, had telephoned to Ouritski, who was still sleeping after a night of work, and had enjoined him, on his own responsibility, to release Savinski without losing an instant.

"I answered for you, Nicolas Vladimirovitch, as I would for myself," he added with a pallid smile. "You know all my thoughts. I have concealed nothing from you. You are indispensable to us. You will work with us some day."

The interview was brief, and, when Savinski took leave of him, he could feel that his companion had dealt frankly with him and that his position, from that time on, would be more secure. On the way back to his apartment, however, doubts came back to him.

"Is it still a pretense?" he said to himself. "Did he know all about it in advance? Did he not himself bring about my arrest . . . ? Is this not another means of bringing pressure to bear on me and mak-

ing me feel that I am in his hands . . . ? And Lydia? Does he know that Lydia was at my apartment? It is impossible that he does not know it. . . . Is he going to use that weapon, too?"

Finally he perceived that Semeonof had not made the slightest allusion to the reason that had been given for the warrant of search and arrest. Not a word of Spasski! That was strange and it set him thinking. It could not have been by chance that he passed over in silence a subject of such importance. At this moment, when they were in the midst of peace negotiations with the Central Empires, the matter of the Don was sharply disturbing the commissioners of the people. Savinski's brows knotted. He was walking rapidly, his head bent. He raised his eyes, realizing that he was in front of his own house. The windows of his study were lighted. Lydia was there. . . . All else was forgotten.

A few moments later, she was in his arms. His lips on the soft loveliness of the nape of her neck, he breathed the intoxicating perfume of youth. A moment like that, was it not worth all the anguish of the night? He heard Lydia speaking. The music of her voice alone was a balm for every ill. She was telling of her return to her home, of the joy of seeing again her room and its furnishings, of breathing its pure air, and then of the luncheon with her family, the great appetite that she had had.

"My father," she said laughing, "assured me that I had never looked so well. He took me into his room with him for a minute. Ah, if you knew how

I longed to tell him that I am yours . . . ! Perhaps he had guessed it. No, no, it is not impossible; from the way he looks at me sometimes, I imagine that he sees very far into my heart and sees things that should remain secret. In his heart, I think, he has only one desire: he wants me to be happy. How? Little that matters to him. He has only one real fear, that is lest the times in which we live should deprive me of the happiness that is my right. But you understand that he can not say what he feels. . . . That is something that comes from him to me in silences when it seems as if we were talking together without saying a word. . . . Nothing but thoughts that wing their way, warm, caressing, silent. . . . I did not dare to speak, either, and I left him to rest. And then I slept for a long time, until you woke me up. And here I am at last with you, in your arms, where I belong.

"I love you. . . . I have always loved you, do you not know it? Do you remember, the first time, when I fell at your feet? You picked me up; I was as if stunned and you held me so firmly and so gently. I quickly recovered my senses, but—must I tell you, what will you think of me?—I pretended to be still unconscious, so that I might stay a moment longer pressed against you. . . . And then I did not see you again for a long time!

"Where had you vanished, bad one . . . ? You were shut up in your home with your family. . . . Ah, I shall beat you, I think," she said, her voice changing. "Six months you hid, you abandoned me.

You were happy, no doubt. . . . Tell me, I beg you, tell me that you were not happy without me . . . ! (A real grief vibrated in her words.) But, anyway, you could live; you did not seek me. It had to be chance that brought us together again at Nathalie's. I, I had learned who you were, of course. . . . But you, did you know so much as my name . . . ? Still, it was very nice that you recognized me. You had not forgotten me, tell me?"

"All the time I felt your supple and charming body in my arms," replied Savinski.

He accompanied her back to her home in time for dinner. The Millionaia was deserted. At the corner of the Aptiekarski Pereoulok where it was very dark, a little group of soldiers was waiting, silent, in the cold night. The one street lamp lighted for a moment the smiling face of the young girl. The soldiers looked at her and let the two pass without a word. Savinski and Lydia, absorbed in each other, did not even see them. Having left Lydia at her house, Savinski hesitated a moment, then decided to dine at his club nearby, instead of going back to his house. He did not suspect that he thus escaped a new experience of revolutionary life and that, had he gone back alone past the soldiers, he would have left in their hands his pocketbook, his fur coat, his clothing, and perhaps even his shoes.

He fell asleep late in the night between sheets where it seemed to him that the fragrance of Lydia

still lingered. It was a delicate perfume, almost imperceptible, leaving behind her something fresh and burning at once, something almost palpable that took form, then vanished. . . .

In the morning, Annushka, as she served his breakfast, laid the papers on his bed, and, at the top of the columns of the *Isvestia* he read these words:

REVOLUTION IN FINLAND
BOURGEOIS GOVERNMENT DRIVEN OUT
SOVIETS IN POWER

With a hand that shook, he unfolded the paper. The Bolsheviks of Finland, supported by marines and Russian soldiers, had carried out a coup d'état. They were masters of Helsingfors and of all the South of Finland. The bourgeois Government had won in the North.

On the somber winter mornings of Petrograd, what becomes of one's strength? The strongest men awake weakened and without courage. These are the hours when life is uncertain in the hearts of men, without fire, like the indefinite light above the city, in a pale sky that remembers the too long night and strives wearily to overcome the obscurity. Savinski was crushed to the earth.

Sonia, his children, in that tempest! Without him . . . ! His imagination offered him only the darkest pictures. . . . Soldiers were invading the villa. . . . They occupied it as masters; a frightful disorder; the tears of the children. And Sonia,

young and beautiful, in the midst of those madmen . . . ! Ah, if he had only hurried more! What would he not have given at that moment to know that she was safe in peaceful Sweden? And what should he do . . . ? Go there . . . ? That was his duty. But Lydia . . . ? At that name, rebellion rose within him. He could not abandon the young girl and leave her alone even for a day without telling her. . . . She had claims on him now, and he felt the impossibility of announcing to her by telephone that he was leaving for Finland to find his family in the hour of danger. . . .

He dressed slowly, a prey to the most gloomy forebodings. About eleven o'clock, almost mechanically, he went to the staff-office on the square, for a new visa was now required for each journey to Finland. At the bureau of passports, a clerk announced that no visas were being given that day and that one could go to Finland only on Government service. Savinski should come back next day. The necessity for deferring his journey relieved Savinski. He had been thrust against a practical impossibility that permitted him at least to live at peace with his conscience.

Early in the afternoon, Lydia came to him. She was in her tenderest and most smiling mood. Savinski let himself be swept away to the enchanted world that her caresses opened to him. While Lydia was with him, he thought only of her. For a moment, just as she was leaving, he was on the point of speaking to her about the revolution in Finland.

"It will be time enough tomorrow," he thought, "if they give me the visa."

And he crushed his mistress in his arms.

They met again that evening at Nathalie's. It was the first time, as lovers, that they had met in public. Savinski longed for and feared the trial. Would he be able to calm the fire in his eyes as he looked at the young girl? She herself, would she have the strength to simulate indifference? He entered. The first person that he saw in the circle was Lydia. She had elected to wear the same black gown that she had worn in prison, the very gown that Savinski, two days before, had unfastened with feverish hands when Lydia had given herself . . . A flood of memories rose within him; he stopped. The voice of Nathalie Choupof-Karamine brought him back to himself, and the words that she called to him across the drawing room made him start.

"Now then, Nicolas Vladimirovitch," she said, "come and tell us your impressions of prison."

Savinski had judged it wiser to say nothing of his arrest and by good luck he had not met at the Gorokhovaia a single person that he knew. Who, then, had informed Nathalie? A name immediately came into his mind: Semeonof. For a long time Savinski had suspected a secret intrigue between the lovely Nathalie and the Bolshevist commissioner. But what had he told her? Had he spoken of Lydia . . . ? Master as he was of himself, he felt his color rise. Instinctively he looked at the young girl, who, like all the other guests, had heard the unfor-

tunate remark. She was radiant with happiness. Without doubt, the evocation there in the drawing-room of the night at the Gorokhovaia had for her a secret charm. . . . To look at her, it seemed that, carried away by the impulse to confess a truth of which she was proud, she was on the point of saying, "I was there, too." Savinski loved her the more for it, but he forestalled her, and, having recovered his coolness, he walked toward Nathalie, saying in an indifferent tone,

"In truth, it is a thing of so little consequence that I had not thought it of interest to speak of it. Who has not been or is not going to pass a few hours or a few days at the Gorokhovaia?"

Nathalie and her guests, however, wanted the details, and he was forced to give them. He had to tell the whole story. Lydia alone asked no questions. She listened, her eyes fixed on Savinski, nodding her head as if to confirm the exactness of his account. At first, Savinski did not dare to look at her; little by little he grew more daring; then, turning his eyes to the young girl, he called up the memory of her a few hours before in his arms. She sat there before him clad in a gown that covered all but her arms, still a little thin, and the soft beginning of the curve of her breast. But for Savinski the gown fell: Lydia was clad only in delicate lingerie that scarcely hid her exquisite breasts. . . . He hesitated now in his choice of words, repeated things he had already said, and finally stopped short.

Nathalie manifested a lively curiosity.

"You are the first of our circle to be arrested," she said. "It is a great honor."

"I would gladly have left it to others," replied Savinski rather curtly. "I think that those who would avoid a like experience will do well to cross the frontier."

Nathalie laughed at him. Why was he so gloomy? The present situation had already lasted longer than any one could have anticipated. Who would have imagined that the Bolsheviks would keep the power for three months? They had succeeded in their coup by deceiving the simple-minded. But now the workers in the factories and the last of the peasants had realized that they had brought only ruin; they would go down suddenly, as Kerenski had fallen. . . .

"Unless the Germans come to settle their account," interposed Ivan Choupof-Karamine. "That is the most probable solution."

Savinski was not listening. He was looking for a chance to speak to Lydia. He was alone with her for only a moment.

"If you knew," he murmured softly, "what I would give to take you home with me!"

The following morning, when he was once more in the grip of the somber thoughts and the forebodings that had overwhelmed him the day before, he was surprised to receive, about ten o'clock, a letter from his wife brought by a train conductor from the Finland Station. Sonia wrote that the revolution had brought no disturbance around them; the little

towns of the countryside, between Wiborg and the frontier, had not been touched by it. The Bolshevist administration in Finland seemed not to wish to disturb the bourgeois population. Trains were running as usual. On the whole, he need for the moment have no anxiety. She hoped that very soon his business would be settled and they would go together to Sweden. The letter was written in that tone of calmness that Sonia brought to everything; it was affectionate, open, frank, and straight-forward, as usual.

Savinski, as he read it, felt emotion rise within him. What an admirable wife was his! She seemed to have been created to avoid all difficulties and troubles for him. Now he breathed freely. Thank God, his family were not in danger. He could then, without reproaching himself, stay on in Petrograd. . . . A postscript caught his attention,

"You can send me an answer by the bearer of this letter. He is a dependable man. His wife and children live next door to us and I am looking after them."

Savinski sent for the conductor, who was waiting in the dining-room.

"You can take a letter to my wife?" he asked.

"Certainly, Your Honor," answered the man. "I am going back tonight at eleven. If Your Honor will prepare a letter, I will pass this way and get it at about eight."

"I will be looking for you," said Savinski. "Come without fail."

Left alone, Savinski began walking up and down his study. For a long time, he continued to walk up and down, smoking cigarettes. When he stopped, his decision was made and he sat down at his desk. He wrote a letter to his wife. He sent her passports for herself, the children, and the maid, with visas for Sweden and for England. He begged her to take advantage of the few days of calm still before her (the example of the peaceful beginning of the Russian revolution was there) to reach Abo and, by the sledge service across the ice, the port of the Aland Islands from which one embarked for Stockholm. An easy journey, by short stages. In three days, without risks or fatigue, they would be in safety.

He sent her, also, a duplicate letter to the directors of the banks where he had his funds in Sweden and in London. She would thus be secured from any want. He himself would rejoin her at the first occasion. For the moment, the frontier was closed, but that was only temporary. Thanks to his connections with the commissariat of Foreign Affairs, he would in a short time obtain a visa for a foreign country. (Carried on by the sweep of his thought, Savinski wrote the last sentence without questioning himself.) She could send him news of her by the Swedish diplomatic mail-bag, and he would take the same way of sending her his letters. The times were such that he could not enter into any discussion on a project very carefully considered, and he counted on her to execute it without delay. His letter was affectionate and tender, but imperative. He was oc-

cupied after that in arranging material questions, to assure his wife free disposal of her fortune. All that took him until well after lunchoen.

When he had finished, he sat thinking, sunk down in a big chair. He felt greatly relieved. It was as if he were breathing now the purer, more subtle air of another planet. Everything was arranged in a manner beyond his hopes. His wife and his children would be safe from the blows of fortune. Not for a moment did he think of the dangers that lay in wait for him in Petrograd. Petrograd was, at that moment, the one city in the world that could give him happiness. There he remained master of his life, of which a favoring god had just turned a page.

A bell rang. Lydia was coming.

PART III

XXI

THE FAIREST OF OUR DAYS

THE winter passed. The city was disturbed. Great emotions—fears, hopes—shook it. By the end of February, the Germans were drawing near. They were already at Pskof, a few hours by railway from Petrograd. Would they come to save the wretches who were dying of fear, of cold, of hunger? In the Bolshevist camp panic reigned. The leaders had fled to Moscow, whence they entreated the Central Empires, in repeated telegrams, to sign the peace, no matter what peace. Trotski had resigned. Semeonof had followed him in his retreat. He, also, was in Moscow, carrying on intrigues in Soviet circles, madder than ever for power now that he had lost it.

Savinski had seen him go without regret. He could no longer endure the occult tyranny that he had felt weighing upon him.

Lydia and Savinski had benefited by the disorder in the city. The Bolshevist police, hampered by the moving of their papers to Moscow, no longer put the same zeal into following up individuals. There came about in this way a sort of truce, in which they lived for each other in an almost complete isolation. They met every day, lunched and dined together

several times a week, and sometimes Lydia arranged to spend the night with her lover. He had now a second apartment, left at his disposal by the precipitate departure of one of his friends, who had pleasant lodgings on the Fontanka. It was there, most often, that he received the young girl, both because of the great convenience of a solitude that no one would come to interrupt and for the charm of its precarious security. The windows looked out on the Fontanka canal, facing the garden along the right bank, above the old Palace of Paul I.

The spring thaw had come early that year. The streets, badly kept and seldom cleared during the winter under the Bolshevist administration, were transformed to lakes of mud. Lydia leaped from stone to stone like a little shepherd girl and laughed to see her less agile lover splashing through the mud. When the sun shone, it filled the room where Lydia and Savinski spent the afternoons. It set straight out from their windows in the tops of the trees not yet in leaf along the other bank. Just then, it was caressing with its last rays the divan on which Lydia was lying and bringing out the gold in the hair that made a halo around the young girl's head. Savinski was looking at her. Her blond skin had the transparence of an antique marble, full of light.

"Lie still," he said. "It seems to me that adolescent Venus, before she had tempted the desire of gods and men, has come to gladden my life. Do not move, I beg you. Let me look at you."

Lydia did not like this enforced stillness and main-

tained it only to please her lover. But he himself was the first to tire of it.

"Little goddess," he said, "are you sleeping? Do you, by chance, no longer love me? Will you tell me by what order of the Immortals you are come into this cold Scythia at the moment when men are the prey of a somber and raging madness?"

"Solely to satisfy you," replied Lydia, rising to make him an enchanting bow. "Solely that you may take delight in me, until the day when you shall have had enough of me and send me back whence I came."

On other days, she said, covering her lover with caresses,

"I do not understand even now how you can love me. I am only a little girl, after all, ignorant and unskilled. I am sure that you laugh at me when I kiss you. . . . What do I know? In truth, nothing. How insipid I must seem to you. . . . I am furious when I think of it."

Yet again, she sang the praises of her lover.

"You are like a rock," she said. "That was the first impression that I had of you . . . do you remember? In front of the Hotel de l'Europe the day that they were firing on Nevski. All around you people were fleeing in streams. But you stood motionless, as if fixed in the earth. I came and fell at your feet and I have stayed there. That is where I belong. I was trembling with fear, but, the moment that you picked me up, the fear vanished. I felt that you had been created to protect me. . . . And you

are handsome . . . ! (Savinski began laughing) Yes, you are handsome, it is not because I love you that I say so. I saw that at once and, even now, be sure that I can look at you dispassionately. You have the beauty that a man should have. Lord Douglas is ravishing; but he is a child. Can one give oneself to a child, when one is only a little girl? You have reached, just in time for me, your hour of perfection. . . ."

"With a great many wrinkles," interposed Savinski.

"Wrinkles," cried Lydia in wrath, "who would dare to say that you have wrinkles! Those are the lines that accentuate your beauty and give it the character that I love in you."

"Do not talk to me that way," said Savinski crushing her in his arms. "My happiness is too great. It is a defiance to the gods."

One afternoon, while they were having tea in the apartment on the Fontanka, they went back in talking of their love to the beginnings of their liaison, and they evoked the memory of the first days of the Bolshevist revolution. Savinski, who had often thought of the tragic end of Lydia's cousin and the long seclusion of the young girl, felt an irresistible longing to know what there had been between the two young people. Had Lydia loved him . . . ? But he feared to waken a sleeping sorrow in her heart and, talking around the subject, dared not approach it directly. As Paul's name had been men-

tioned, he asked Lydia something of the character of her cousin. For a long time, she answered only briefly. Gradually, however, the veil lifted. The face of Paul stood out more clearly and, at last, Lydia, feeling once more the old emotion, told Savinski what her cousin's death had meant to her.

"Paul," she said, "was still a child, he had kept a soul marvellously pure and upright. He was incapable of cowardice, even of weakness. . . . He loved me; I loved him, too, but in a different way, as I would have loved a brother. It grieved him very deeply. . . . I do not know why, but I was not always very kind to him. I knew my power and sometimes I abused it. I wanted Paul to obey me in everything; I would not permit the least opposition on his part. And then, you see, I was still just a very little girl at that time; I did not realize anything, except the endless longing that I had to see you, you. . . . I was stupid about everything else; I went through the days of the revolution without taking them in. You remember, besides, that all that seemed to me a spectacle at which I was looking on, but in which I had no concern.

"Then, all of a sudden, there came that clap of thunder: the assault on the Winter Palace where Paul was confined. I told you about it at the time, I think. The thought that Paul might be killed there, so near me, overwhelmed me. It was not until that moment that I felt the worth of human life, of his that was in danger then, of yours, of mine, that might be threatened the next day. . . . I lived years

in those few hours, and what I thought then has had great influence on what has happened to us, to you and to me, since then. . . . All this, I think that you have guessed long ago, for you know all that is in my heart. . . .

"But my cousin's death itself came under unbearable circumstances. I had decided that he was to escape; everything had been arranged. He would have had no difficulty in leaving the school. I had furnished him the means. . . . The thing that you do not know, though, is that Paul refused to leave. He wrote me a long letter—which I no longer have, alas, I burned it in a first impulse of anger—to explain to me that he must share the fate of his comrades. I was angry, I was annoyed with him; I wrote back to him that if he did not love me enough to do what I asked without discussion, I did not care to see him again. . . . That was the last letter that he had from me, the poor boy. . . . I am sure that at the moment when they killed him, it was of me that he was thinking. He died like a brave lad, but his heart was torn with the thought that I no longer loved him. . . .

"The thought of that was so grievous to me that I could not forgive myself. I thought that I could not go on living. I was alone in the world. . . . You had gone to Finland, of course. . . . How I hated, even then, your journeys to Finland . . . ! After that, I thought a great deal. All the impressions that had flashed, like lightning, through my mind the night of the taking of the Winter Palace, developed,

lighted up whatever in me had remained dark. . . . I saw life as something wholly new. It is very difficult to explain it to you. . . . Then, one day, I felt the need of coming out of my isolation and of seeing you again. I was no longer the same person. I had been ill, and all at once the illness had worn itself out and I longed to be happy, passionately; I had forgotten everything; I felt only that I had so little time before me, that I must hurry, that my days would be short . . . and then I came to you."

They lived thus for some months in unbelievable happiness. Everything conspired to prolong the enchantment of the present hour. If they thought of the dangers they had come through, they remembered that they had shared them, and the memory of perilous days lived together made dearer still the tranquillity that they were now enjoying. They did not think of the future. The future, for them, was their next meeting. So great was their intoxication that they made no plans. What would become of them? They did not even ask. Those who live in a regulated, ordered society, made to endure, may look into the future and consider what their lives will be in six months or a year. In the midst of the earthquake that was shaking Old Russia, who would have been so mad as to take thought of the morrow? It was today that one must live.

This very day-to-day quality of their happiness made it the more precious to them. The imperfections inevitable in a love that grows in security were

spared them. They knew neither the quarrels that are born of idleness nor the frictions of a liaison carried on in the midst of people from whom it must be concealed, neither the weariness of satiety nor the dead hours that sometimes rise from the very certainty of a possession that nothing threatens. Every moment had its worth, for they felt dimly that each one might be the last and that they must draw from each an infinity of passion. The harsh climate of Petrograd smiled upon them. Spring was early that year. The days were growing longer; the light was gradually taking possession of a sky clearer and more intensely blue, and breezes of an incredible softness whispered among the still-lifeless branches of the trees, stirring the sap in the trunks and wakening confused hopes in the hearts of men.

Meanwhile, the foreign political crisis was subsiding. The peace had been signed. The Germans, who had at one time thought of intervening in the internal affairs of Russia, as the manifesto of Leopold of Bavaria had intimated, had renounced their project. Lenine was to have the opportunity to develop his Communist program in full and make civil war a blood-stained reality. On all sides, the Bolshevist authorities were following up the men who had been prominent under the old régime or in the first phase of the revolution; they were imprisoning them; they were beginning to shoot a great number of them without trial. In Petrograd, Mark Salomonovitch Ouritski, head of the department of investigation

for counter revolution, had been given absolute powers and was displaying great activity. There was not a day that passed without news of the arrest of some notable men.

The salon of Nathalie Choupof-Karamine had passed from an excess of joy at the thought that the Germans were coming to reestablish order in Russia, to an extreme of despair at seeing them come to a halt some two hundred versts from the capital. It resounded with the wailings that the few faithful who remained to it raised in alternating chorus. Lord Douglas had departed for England with his Ambassador, and Semeonof had left Petrograd for Moscow.

Nathalie was thus deprived of the presence in her house of a member of the diplomatic corps that would shield her, so she believed, from Bolshevist searches. It was true that, since the imprisonment of M. Diamandi, the Minister from Roumania, the Terrorist dictators had shown that they had small regard for diplomatic immunity. On the other hand, the absence of Semeonof took from her a secret, but powerful ally. In spite of all this, Ivan Choupof-Karamine and his wife endured better than their friends the wretchedness of the times. That fat man, always pallid, retained his jesting humor, and Savinski asked himself what was the hidden cause of their assurance. He saw them rarely now. The rôle of the Choupof-Karamines had about it something unaccountable and equivocal. He judged it prudent

to be careful what he said before them. On rare occasions, in the evening, he met Lydia there when he could not see her otherwise.

Savinski went very often to see Prince Serge, who was constantly sending for him and seemed unable to do without him; a strange intimacy had grown up between them. Lydia was the secret tie that united them, and sometimes Savinski questioned in amazement whether Lydia had not been right when she thought that her father saw more deeply into her heart than any one imagined. In fact, the Prince seldom talked to him of anything save his daughter. He had never a word of regret for the failure of the arrangements for the marriage to Lord Douglas. On the contrary, he seemed happy that Lydia had refused the young Englishman.

"I knew very well," he said with joy apparent in his words, "that she would not accept that lad, handsome as he is. She is my daughter, I know her. . . . She will never do anything mediocre."

And he looked his companion straight in the eyes, as if seeking his approval.

On another day, he was more explicit.

"I think that you understand perfectly what I want to say. . . . I keep my daughter with me, I am proud of her; I shall keep her until the end, which will be when God wills. Do not think that it is egotism that makes me speak in this way. I am concerned not with myself, but only with her. . . . I feel, and I am not mistaken, that Lydia is happy

now. . . . How do I know it? It is difficult to say. Perhaps people sick as I am and living much alone, see things that remain hidden from others. And then, Nicolas Vladimirovitch, there is something more. . . . It seems to me that many questions are now growing clear to my eyes. . . . Yes, when one is near the end and looks on, as we have been looking for a year, at the fall of a world, life gradually shows itself to be different from our old idea of it, simpler in fact. . . . I think that for us, at the present hour, many problems that appeared insoluble no longer exist in reality and that men have built artificial barriers between themselves and their happiness. . . . It required these days of trial and the approach of death, to understand it. . . ."

He had made this long speech slowly, in a low voice, pausing sometimes as if seeking to clarify his thought.

When he had ended, there was a silence in which Savinski seemed to sense passing between them that flood of caressing and silent thoughts of which Lydia had once spoken. He was too deeply moved to speak.

As he was taking his leave a half-hour later, the Prince drew him gently toward him.

"Will you kiss me, Nicolas Vladimirovitch?" he said. "I love you very dearly. . . ."

Savinski bent over him. The thin mouth and the bristling beard of the Prince pressed against his face, and, as he received the kiss of the old man, he felt a great tear roll down his cheek.

Still the days went on, and May was already bringing the tender green of leaves to the black branches of the trees. Savinski and Lydia, taking advantage of the lengthened afternoons and the light evenings, went on long walks through the city. Often they walked along the quays of the Neva, the granite walls of which barely held back the flooding waters on which moved slowly in the drift, like great floating water-lilies, a few late blocks of ice from Lake Ladoga. Beyond the blue waters of the wide river, the palaces lifted their varied architecture to the amber clarity of the twilight. There were the red bricks of the First Cadet Corps, the antique colonnade of the Exchange, the noble building of the Academy of Sciences. The air had a luminous transparence that one sees only in these northern springs. Sometimes they sat down on the parapet of the quay and stayed to dream, letting their eyes wander over the heavy barges anchored near the banks. The beauty of the quiet hours filled their souls. They were silent. Where were they? Far from the world, from the revolution, its terrors and its famine. They were dwelling in those distant and mysterious lands where dwelt Lorenzo and Jessica, Troilus and Cressida, Hero and Leander, all those whom a passionate love has separated from the circle of the living.

When the time came for them to go home, they could not bring themselves to part.

"Let us stay until night," Lydia would say.

And the night made itself their accomplice, the

day trailed in the heavens lights that would not die; the stars would be out before the twilight had gone and night come, far on toward eleven o'clock. Slowly they would walk back to the Volynski house, and often, without caring what the servants might think, Savinski would come in for a moment to have a cup of tea with Lydia.

Very late, he would go back to his own apartment.

About them, the fever of the city ran higher and higher. The assassination of the two commissioners, Volodarski and Ouritski, had let loose the Terror. The victims of the Bolshevist reprisals were numbered in hundreds. The circle of their acquaintances grew smaller and smaller. Some were fleeing, others had been arrested.

Lydia and Savinski passed without hearing the cries of anguish that went up on all sides.

XXII

A CALL

SAVINSKI had news from Spasski. He was living in Moscow, a few steps from the Kremlin, and was organizing an association of counter-revolutionary officers. He sent a message to Savinski to say that he would be in Petrograd for a few days at the end of August and that he must see him without fail.

Savinski did not conceal this from Lydia. He thought aloud with her, and it would not have occurred to him to hide anything from her. But when she heard that her lover was going to see Spasski, she declared that she was going with him. If there was danger in this call, she ought to share it. Moreover, she liked Spasski and would be glad to see him again. She did not add that the real feeling that moved her to make this call, was simply the desire to be seen by an old friend in the company of her lover and to make her happiness clear to him.

On the day appointed for the call, Savinski was waiting in his apartment for Lydia. He was to go with her to a distant apartment on the other side of the river, where Spasski was staying. As he was looking out of the window to see whether the young girl was coming, he noticed a cab at the street door. The

driver was an old man with a white beard and very small nose. It seemed to Savinski that he recognized the man. He strove to remember. Where had he seen him? Ah, at his own door, two or three days before.

"It is an izvostchik from the Okhrana," he thought suddenly. "They are not very clever, really. They could change and not send the same man twice in succession, especially in a street as deserted as mine is."

At the same time, however, the idea that he was again being followed was very disagreeable to him. What danger threatened them now, Lydia and himself? He must think about it, take precautions. This abrupt recall to the realities of the times left him chilled for some minutes.

The arrival of Lydia brought peace back to his heart. They went out together. Savinski spoke to the old izvostchik.

"How much to go to Zabalkanski?"

"What number, *barine?*"

"I do not know the number, but I know the house," said Savinski. "It is about halfway down the Prospect."

"Twenty-five rubles to you," said the driver. "That is not dear."

"It is still too dear for a bourgeois like me at present," replied Savinski pleasantly. "I will take the street-car."

The driver did not answer. Savinski walked with Lydia to the Millionaia. Thus while the izvostchik

started his horse on a slow trot toward the south side of Petrograd, Savinski and Lydia were driving in another cab toward the suburbs on the north.

When they came near the street to which they were going, they left the cab to walk to the house. The sight of a soldier seated in the vestibule disturbed Savinski. Up to that time, the presence of Lydia had kept him from thinking of the imprudence that he was committing in needlessly mixing the young girl up in an adventure that might turn out to be perilous. But the soldier did not even look at them, and they went on up the stairs to the apartment of which they had the number.

A gracious young woman opened the door for them. The presence of Lydia seemed to surprise her and her eyes questioned Savinski with embarrassment. He smiled.

"Do not be disturbed," he said, "Madame is with me."

"Madame" pleased Lydia.

Without replying, the young woman showed them into a drawing-room, where she left them alone. It was a large room, bare and cold. In one corner, a small table not yet cleared showed that two people had taken luncheon there.

"Whose apartment is it?" asked Lydia in a low voice.

"That of brave men, certainly," replied Savinski, "but I do not know what their names are. Our friend has several lodgings like this where they hide him, but even to me he has never told the name of his

hosts. . . . He is right; he is playing a dangerous game, both for himself and for those who receive him."

The door opened just then, and Alexandre Ivanovitch Spasski was before them. His forceful face lighted with a smile of pleasure when he saw Lydia. His first greeting was for her.

"Lydia Serguevna," he said, "what a pleasure you are giving me! You do not know how often I have thought of you. But I should never have dared to ask you to come here."

In no time at all, they were all three talking together with a charming intimacy. At first Savinski tried to maintain a certain formality in speaking to Lydia, but finding that she answered with the intimacy to which they were accustomed, he gave it up and they all talked like old friends. Spasski explained to them his projects. He had a considerable fighting organization, which had already come near to capturing Iaroslaf. Perm was in their hands. Koltchak and the Czechoslovaks had joined them. All Siberia was free from the yoke of the Soviets. He was leaving to rejoin Koltchak, who seemed to have a poor staff.

"I wanted to suggest to you that you come with me, Nicolas Vladimirovitch. Petrograd has no longer any interest. There is nothing to be done here. The Allies are at Archangel. We are going to unite with them. Next spring we will all march together on Moscow."

Savinski found him just as he had left him, inac-

cessible to fear, with the same enthusiasm, the same determination to succeed that no check could overcome. They talked for some time of the actual situation. Spasski insisted that his friend should accept his proposal.

"And what about me?" said Lydia suddenly.

"You, Lydia Serguevna, why you will come and work with us, that goes without saying. A journey to the Ural, even though a little tiring, does not frighten you, and the third class will not be too hard for you, or even, possibly, a few versts in a wagon. I have already a passport for Nicolas Vladimirovitch. He is going to change his too well-known name for the more obscure one of Petrof."

"I shall be Madame Petrova," said Lydia, enchanted.

"We will put it, then, that Comrade Petrof is travelling with his wife."

They parted, making an appointment to meet at a different house on the day after the next.

The following morning, however, as Savinski was having breakfast alone, a soldier came to bring him a note from Spasski,—very concise,

"They know that I have come. I can not stay and am leaving at once. Here is your passport. I shall look for you at Perm.——S."

The passport was in the name of Ivan Iliitch Petrof, dealer in flax, of Vladimir. Mme. Petrova accompanied her husband. The same day, Savinski went to his apartment on the Fontanka and gave the passport to his servant, who gave it to the head

doorkeeper, so that Savinski now found himself with a legal double personality in Petrograd.

"Now I have only to let my beard grow," he said to Lydia.

"Do you think that will be necessary?" she questioned anxiously.

"Alas, there are too many people that know me," he said, "but, for the moment, Nicolas Vladimirovitch can still live in this city.

XXIII

CLOUDS ON THE HORIZON

AUTUMN was come, and the rains. Soon the first snows fell.

"We are going to be cold, my child," said Savinski to Lydia.

"In your arms, I shall never be cold," she answered laughing.

At the apartment on the Aptiekarski Pereoulok, Savinski had been obliged to shut off the dining-room to save his supply of wood, which he found it difficult to replenish. They heated only the study and the sleeping-room. On the Fontanka, there remained only enough wood for two or three months. There was great difficulty in getting enough to eat, no matter how much money one spent. In the house of Prince Serge, only the rooms overlooking the quays were habitable. With the Choupof-Karamines, the situation was better, for Nathalie had received—no one knew whence—twenty cords of the best birch. Military camions had brought it one day. Her circle was smaller than ever. She had not more than a dozen Russian friends and a few Ministers from the neutral legations, on whom she showered attentions.

Semeonof had reappeared in Petrograd. Under

Trotski, as Minister of War, he had returned to favor and had been made Military Commander of the city. Savinski learned of his return without pleasure. However, he saw him from time to time. It seemed to him that with his success Semeonof had become a little more human. The triumph of Bolshevism, on which he had speculated, filled him with content. He was completely absorbed in organizing the Red Army, the great idea of the reign of Trotski.

"We are going to reestablish the Empire on its natural boundaries," he said to Savinski one day, "and perhaps give it an extent that it has never had. The task is easy for us now. The war has exhausted Europe. There is discontent on every side. The sacrifices have been too great. And then, all the nations hate each other now. There is no longer a Europe, but a confusion of passions and antagonistic interests. We alone have one doctrine and one faith, in the face of divided adversaries. We shall do great things, I predicted that to you before. . . . How long are you going to hold a grudge against us? See what positions we can offer to those who rally sincerely to our support! You have read the announcement of Lenine, stating that he would give a half million rubles to the financier who could establish the finances of the State."

Savinski shrugged his shoulders wearily. He felt that he had not the strength to discuss it. He confined himself to saying,

"You may be right, Leon Borissovitch. Alas, I do

not feel myself to be equal to undertaking that task."

"Think again, Nicolas Vladimirovitch, but the times are such that a man must be with us or against us. In the period that we are in, the half-hearted will be crushed. Remember what I am telling you. I do not take you for a traitor."

It was the Semeonof of former days that was speaking again, and Savinski left him chilled to the soul.

To join the Bolshevist party was out of the question. Make himself the accomplice of the atrocities that were covering Russia with blood and bringing low all his old friends about him, it was not even to be thought of. And, besides, what power could he exercise there? How could he check the economic catastrophe, the plunge into the abyss toward which Russia was rolling?

But then, how long could he continue to live there? Every day added to the difficulties and the dangers. Where could he go? Perm and Koltchak? The Ukraine? How could he take Lydia, whom he could not live without? The helpless old Prince, the Princess, infirm of will, unable to leave her little salon. Go to Finland with them all, if he could persuade them to go? But would he find there the facilities that he had in Petrograd for seeing Lydia freely for five or six hours a day? His wife and his children were in England. Would not Sonia then want to come back to him? How could he refuse to receive her? And the same answer made itself heard unceasingly: he would not give up Lydia.

The anguish at times tore his heart. He found peace again only with his mistress. He did not weary of her, nor had she tired of him. Every day, on the contrary, rendered closer and stronger the ties that bound them. Had he lived before he knew her? Could he continue to live without her? He talked freely with Lydia, he concealed from her none of his forebodings; between them there was not the shadow of a secret. Before her, he "thought aloud", as he said to her, and nothing was more precious, in the midst of the oppression that the Terror hung over the city, than this entire frankness between them.

The first time that he talked freely with her of the situation as he was coming to see it, however, he approached only with great apprehension the suggestion of the possible return of his wife to Finland.

Lydia stopped him instantly when she understood what he had in mind. She flung herself into his arms weeping.

"Am I not enough for you, then?" she said, choking with sobs. "Are you tired of me . . . ? Do you already no longer love me . . . ?"

She was suffocating with grief; she could not speak. It was in vain that Savinski tried to reason with her, to show her absurdity of her fears. She would listen to nothing. When the crisis had exhausted its violence, she seemed suddenly transformed. She had regained all her self-possession. She talked about it with apparent calmness.

"I understand perfectly," she said to Savinski, who was stupefied, "that you run great risks here

and that you endure them only because of me. You may be thrown into prison; worse yet may happen to you. If you are afraid, how can I hold it against you . . . ? In your place, I should feel as you do. Then, why discuss it? There is nothing to say. . . . Prepare for your departure. I will help you with everything. But as for me, I will not leave Russia. I would rather die here than to live anywhere else."

But she could not long keep up the effort. She flung herself down on the divan, her head buried in the cushions, shuddering all over. And when Savinski bent over her, she took his head between her two hands.

"Forgive me," she stammered, "forgive me. . . . I am a bad child. . . . But the grief is too great for me. . . . Do not leave, you who are mine. . . . I will follow you where you will. . . . You are the master; I will be your servant. . . ."

She covered him with passionate kisses. Crushing her against him, his cheek wet with her tears, Savinski could only repeat,

"Lydotchka, I have told you so long ago, I will never leave you."

. . . . . .

The day after this scene, which had shattered the nerves of both the lovers, Lydia, coming to Savinski's house about three in the afternoon, found Annushka in consternation. About ten o'clock that morning, a commissioner and a soldier had come in an automobile to get her master, to take him to the

Gorokhovaia. They had not allowed him time to write, but he had left a message for Lydia Serguevna that it was most probably only a matter of an interrogation and he would be released in the afternoon. If not, she would receive the following morning a note from him that he would send to her by one of the prisoners who were always being released.

Lydia grew white and leaned against old Annushka. Savinski in prison . . . ! Without her . . . ! Because of her, no doubt . . . ! A frightful remorse tore her soul at the memory of the words that she had said the day before. How could she wait? How could she waste a moment? She must fly to Semeonof. . . . The necessity for action gave her back her strength. She went with flying feet to the staff-office on the square of the Palace, and asked to see the General.

Chance willed that he was in his office. When the name of Lydia Serguevna was brought to him, he had her shown in at once. It was more than a year since they had met, and even the insensible Semeonof stood astounded at the change that so short a time had brought in the young girl's expression. He had left her almost a child, and he had before him a woman whose troubled face could not lessen her beauty. And this face vibrant with emotion made even Semeonof understand a depth of passion that he had never suspected in her. For the first time, he felt the heart of a man beat in his own breast, and, as Lydia cried to him: "Nicolas Vladimirovitch is in prison," he reassured her, and, at the same time, a

strange feeling, which he had never experienced before and which singularly resembled jealousy, rose within him.

"Do not distress yourself," he said, "I will look out for him at once."

He caught up the telephone. But Lydia put her hand on his.

"He is right near here," she said in a different voice, "two steps away, at the Gorokhovaia. Let us go there together."

Semeonof looked at her in astonishment. How she loved him! But he offered no objection and followed her. When they came to the foot of the stairway, before going out on the square of the Palace, he said to her,

"Stay here, Lydia Serguevna. I can not take you with me to the Gorokhovaia. I will be back in a moment."

But Lydia refused. . . .

"I will wait for you in the street," she said, "every moment counts. . . ."

Out in the square and during the few moments that they were crossing over, Semeonof said to Lydia,

"Since you are here now and since you have influence with Nicolas Vladimirovitch, allow me to make you understand that you can do him a great service. He is in danger, it is true. . . . I shall perhaps be able to get him out of this affair, but, Lydia Serguevna, he must come over to us, work with us. We have need of him. Persuade him of it. . . . Other-

wise, I shall not always be powerful enough to save him."

"Yes, yes," said Lydia, who seemed not to hear. "I promise you. . . . But let us hurry. . . . I will see you again later. You shall explain to me then what I must do."

They were at the door of the Prefecture, and Semeonof entered alone. Ten minutes later, he rejoined Lydia, white and motionless on the walk.

"The matter is arranged," he said. "Our friend will be set free, but there are some formalities to be gone through with. I have told them to bring him to the staff-office. If you want to wait for him, come with me where you will be warm. I do not like to leave you on this icy walk."

Lydia followed him without protest. She was cold; she was tired. Never since she had belonged to Savinski, had she known an hour when she felt such wretchedness.

Semeonof took up again the theme that he had introduced on the way to the prison. Savinski was taking great risks now; even today, his release had not been granted without difficulty. And, knowing Lydia to be an ardent patriot, he brought out with ingenuity the plan of the reunion of Russian territory under the red flag and the wiping out of the impious work of dismemberment begun by the first revolution. On this ground, he was at his best.

He talked brilliantly. He evoked the great memories of the French Revolution, and if Lydia could not grasp the ingenuity of the allusion to the un-

known young Bonaparte, seeking his way in the train of Robespierre, it was because she put no good will to it. But, in truth, Lydia scarcely listened. Savinski was long in coming, what else could she think of? So long as he was not there, there would be no peace in her heart. And, besides, her heart was greatly troubled. It was the question of going away that came up again, Finland, the return of Sonia. . . . Lydia was as if dead. Still she must answer Semeonof's direct question, as he was explaining to her the necessity for her, also, to accept a position in the Government offices. No one could live without working for the Soviets. He could take her on at the staff-office and would give her interesting work to do.

She smiled faintly.

"I thank you, Leon Borissovitch, you are very kind. . . ."

Suddenly she bounded toward the door. Savinski was coming in.

"Ah, here you are," she said, "I see you again!"

She had forgotten the very presence of Semeonof, who looked at her without speaking. A few moments later, she took her lover away with her, leaving him barely time to thank Leon Borissovitch.

A few weeks passed, and once more the holidays of Christmas and New Year's Day were celebrated in sadness and general misery. The hopes of rescue seemed every day farther away. They must wait now until summer to see Admiral Koltchak and General Denikine resume the offensive in Siberia and in the

South. Would they succeed? Nothing seemed less certain, yet they must go through the icy months of winter with insufficient heat and food. Lydia was often anxious and was angry with herself for her sadness. She would have liked, with her youth, to give only gayety and joy to her lover. She said to herself that she ought now to make up to him for everything. Was he not in Petrograd solely for her sake, separated from his family . . . ? And yet how could she resign herself to going away? And if she had the strength for that, how could she persuade her mother, shut up in her own rooms, to go, or her father, unable to undergo the fatigues of a difficult journey? And then, could they get a visa? These obstacles seemed to her insurmountable, but the greatest obstacle of all she found in herself.

It was at that time that an unforeseen event came, once more, to change the whole situation and give it a new aspect.

Lydia arrived at the apartment one afternoon in January, just as Savinski had finished a solitary luncheon served on a little table beside the stove in his study. She was excited and, with her first words, she told Savinski what had happened.

"Imagine," she said to him, "we had a search, we also, last night. But, thank God, none of us was arrested. They came to see whether we had any concealed arms or compromising papers. . . . And then, this was made at a reasonable hour, at least. It was not midnight and no one had gone to bed. The funny thing about it, darling, was that the mili-

tary commissioner was that same Ivanof who came here, you remember. . . . He recognized me, of course, but he said not a word before my mother. Only, when we were alone for a moment, he smiled at me and said that I was as beautiful as ever, imagine it. . . .

"My poor father did very well. Not the least alarm, not even surprise. He seemed to have expected their coming and to be surprised only that they were so long in coming. Ivanof made his excuses to him, and they remained hardly ten minutes in his room. . . .

"As for mamma, that was a very different matter. He had to wait for a long time at her door. She was shut in with her maid, and when she opened the door—would you believe it?—she was wearing a formal ball gown with all the jewels that she has left. She was trembling like a leaf, my poor mother, but she was full of dignity and she said to the commissioners: 'Gentlemen, I am ready to follow you, pardon me for keeping you waiting.' She would not listen to a word that they said to her. Ivanof tried in vain to reassure her. . . . She kept saying over and over: 'I will show you, gentlemen, that a true Russian knows how to die.' And, at first, I wanted to laugh, you understand, and then I was so sorry for her that the tears came into my eyes. . . . Sometimes she would take me in her arms and say: 'I think that the mother will suffice you, gentlemen, permit me to embrace my daughter.' It was a heart-rending scene. At last they went away and left her

half fainting with Katia. . . . As for me, I had to accompany them through the rest of the house, where one shivered with the cold. They left at half-past one, having found nothing, neither papers nor arms, except papa's old sabre, which they left. This time, the soldiers stole a few things. . . ."

Lydia stopped abruptly, as if she had something more to say before which she had come to a stop. Savinski, who had not taken his eyes from her, saw her grow thoughtful; her forehead was knotted; her eyes fled from those of her lover. She drew close to Savinski, put her head on his shoulder, and remained for a long time silent.

"How are your parents today?" asked Savinski at last.

Lydia made a quick gesture.

"I will tell you all about it," she said. "Papa is very well; it is really surprising. It is a long time since he has seemed in such good health. This morning, he took several steps alone in his room with his two canes, and he was humming an old song that he loves and that I have not heard since the revolution. . . . But my poor mother is completely overcome. . . . It is really tragic. . . . Just think that she would not go to bed. No, she has only one idea now: to leave Russia. During the night, even, she began packing her trunks; she has been working at it with Katia all the morning. She keeps saying over and over: 'I will not stay another day in a country where women are treated so. . . .'

"I do not know, but I think that she has rather

lost her wits. . . . This morning she was absolutely determined to send General Vassilief to make reservations at the Finland Station for Stockholm. She thought that they still had tickets for foreign countries, just as in the old days. . . . The poor General had to go, and when he came back with empty hands, she made him a dreadful scene, told him that it was his fault, that he was good for nothing, and, finally declared that she wanted to see you, that only you would know how to arrange everything for her. It was she who sent me to you. She is waiting for you. . . ."

Again, there was a long silence. Lydia remained pressed close against Savinski, as if she dared not look at him. He heard the hurried beatings of her heart. He had no need to question her; he knew what passion of grief she was suffering at that hour. He caressed her gently and in a low voice he said to her,

"Wherever we may be, we will live together, my little soul. . . . Console yourself, I entreat you."

"I feel that I am going to lose you," said Lydia, sobbing.

And she clung despairingly to her lover.

XXIV

THE DEPARTURE

THERE was nothing to be done but to prepare for departure and to obtain the visas of the Government. Lydia had declared that she would not leave Russia until Savinski should have his passport out of the country fully in order. It was out of the question to ask for it in his own name, but by good luck he had the passport that Spasski had given him, in the name of Ivan Ilyitch Petrof, dealer in flax. Should he try to reach nearby Esthonia under that name? There were at the moment buyers of flax for Europe at Reval, and it might be that the pretext would be sufficient. Would it be better, on the other hand, to escape secretly through Finland? There were smuggling agencies that agreed to take one across the border for twenty thousand rubles. Lydia was opposed to this plan, which seemed to her dangerous, whereas Savinski thought it easy. She was willing to accept it only as a last resource, in case the visa for Reval was refused. Savinski went about it without waste of time.

Lydia, meanwhile, had hopes of obtaining through Semeonof passports for herself and her family which would permit them to reach Finland in a few hours. The old Prince, although the improvement in

his health continued, could not stand a longer journey. The Princess was living in the greatest agitation. Her trunks had been ready and locked since the day after the search had taken place. She would not take off her travelling costume. Her relations with her old friend Vassilief had undergone a curious change. She treated him now like a man of no worth, as a useless being whom one tolerates about one, but from whom one expects nothing. She would not forgive him for being unable to procure at the Finland Station the tickets that she had sent him to get. She assumed an entire lack of interest in him, and when the poor General, who felt himself forgotten in the fever that had seized upon the household, ventured to question,

"And what shall I do?" she merely replied,

"You are not a child, so far as I know. If you want to follow us, make your arrangements."

As for Prince Serge, he forced himself every day to take a few steps in his room, whistling a military march. He was much concerned about Savinski. Lydia, without giving him details, reassured him. Savinski would be at Helsingfors two or three days after they reached there.

Since the bureau of passports refused visas for foreign countries, it was necessary to see Semeonof. Lydia went alone.

Semeonof listened to her with friendly politeness and raised no difficulty regarding the visas for the Prince and for the Princess, which he would try to obtain from the commissariat of Foreign Affairs.

The very bad health of the Prince justified treatment in some other country. A doctor would come to see him and give his opinion. But the matter might be considered arranged.

Lydia experienced a strange sensation in finding herself face to face with Semeonof. She had difficulty in imagining, as she looked at him, that he was one of the leaders of that terrible Bolshevist party that was spreading terror in Russia and to whom the life of a man was a thing of little moment. He showed her a most perfect courtesy, even more marked than in the earlier days when she used to meet him in the drawing-room of Nathalie Choupof-Karamine. He was distinguished, well-groomed. Could it be that that white hand had signed so many condemnations to death? He had saved Savinski . . . ? But was it not he who had had him arrested . . . ? How enigmatic he was, how impenetrable!

However, he was showing himself very amiable and treating his visitor with great consideration. Clearly, he wished to please her.

"I understand," he said, "that your father and your mother should wish to leave Petrograd, and I will do all that I can to facilitate their going. But you, Lydia Serguevna, why do you want to go . . . ? If you were an ordinary young girl, I should find it natural that you should be afraid to live in a city where the order is not perfect, the best one can do, where one is ill warmed and poorly fed. But you are far above these commonplace fears. . . . You have courage, I know it. You are not easily frightened.

. . . Do you not feel the tremendous interest that there is in living in Russia just now? Never has our country been the scene of a human experience more stirring than that which we are now trying. The eyes of the whole world are upon us. Our fever has crossed the frontiers, reached Europe, and leaped the seas. From those throes, a new humanity is going to come forth. It is here that it will see the light. . . . It is Russia that will make a gift of it to the world. Never has Russia lived a nobler, more inspiring hour. . . . Think of our great men, of our Pan-Slavists, of Dostoievski whom you love so much. They have all felt that it was reserved for Russia to speak the new word for which all the world is waiting. Well then, that new word, it is we who are bringing it, Lydia Serguevna, and it is at the moment when Russia is in the throes of a new birth that you want to go away and live the easy life of the idle in a foreign country, and that to avoid the discomfort of Petrograd today . . . ? Lydia Serguevna, permit me to say to you, that is not worthy of you."

He said to Lydia the very words that she expected. There was not a day when she was not disconsolate over having to leave Russia, and the new arguments that Semeonof brought up found a willing listener in her. So she followed him to the ground to which he summoned her, and an eager conversation began between them, in which the officer took the keenest pleasure.

But Lydia came back to her original point.

"My father is at the end of his days," she said.

"He loves only me in the world; I can not leave him, but believe me, Leon Borissovitch, I shall be desolated to live in Helsingfors. In the first place, I detest the Finns. . . ."

"Bravo!" cried Semeonof delighted, "I hear a true Russian. . . . You will see, Lydia Serguevna, what we shall do with our army. But if you go away. . . ."

He paused, hesitated, looked Lydia straight in the face and added,

"Will you really have the courage to leave us . . . ?

And without giving her time to reply, he went on,

"Ah well, if you go away, I am certain that you will come back, unless it is we who come to seek you in Finland."

And, all at once, he added,

"By the way, what does our friend Nicolas Vladimirovitch think of all this? You know that we shall not permit him to leave."

Lydia, surprised by this unexpected attack, could not help blushing. This Semeonof was decidedly a dangerous man, she had been right about him from the first day. How she longed to cry aloud the truth to this man who imagined that he could please her! She bit her lips and confined herself to replying,

"You will ask him that yourself, Leon Borissovitch."

Some ten days later, the Volynski family had their passports in order; even Katia was included on them.

Savinski, meanwhile, had been working to obtain a visa for Ivan Ilyitch Petrof. Money played an efficacious part in the bureaus of the commissariat, and, one evening when Lydia came to dinner with him, Savinski showed her the official paper that permitted the dealer in flax to go to Reval. Once there, he would have no difficulty in reaching Helsingfors. For fear of a search, he left the passport at his apartment on the Fontanka.

The Volynski family were to leave some morning for Finland. The same evening Savinski would take the train for Reval. For two weeks he had been letting his beard grow, and he had bought slightly tinted glasses, so that he would not be recognized if he happened to meet any one that he knew at the station or on the train.

The day before their departure, in the morning, Lydia was surprised to be called to the telephone by Semeonof. The Commander-in-Chief of the Army of the North wished the young girl a pleasant journey and a prompt return. Orders had been given at the frontier to make the formalities there easy for them. Finally, Semeonof, to spare the old Prince the fatigue of going in a sledge, would permit himself to send his own motor to take them to the station. He ended with this remark,

"I am doing things in such way as to be certain of seeing you again, Lydia Serguevna."

What did those enigmatic words mean? They disturbed the young girl. Semeonof seemed to her a

being endowed with a diabolical power. How far could his dark schemings reach . . . ? But in the hurry of the morning, she had little time to think about it. The Princess accepted as perfectly natural the offer of the automobile. Had not Semeonof belonged to one of the regiments of the Guards? He was, after all, a man of her own world. Good breeding was outside and above political questions.

Lydia spent the afternoon with Savinski. She did not tell him Semeonof's last words. What was the use of disturbing him? Besides, she could think only of the departure of the next morning which, for two or three days, at least, was going to separate her from her lover. She could not accept the thought of leaving him alone even for a few hours in Petrograd. She made him promise not to appear in the streets during the day; he must spend the afternoon in the apartment on the Fontanka and, at night, go to the Baltic Station. He must not speak to any one on the train, and, as soon as he reached Reval, he was to telegraph her at the Hotel Kemp in Helsingfors. These exact details, which she repeated several times, did not succeed in dispelling her anxiety. She tried to hide it from her beloved, but she could not. And Savinski himself, seeing before him his young and lovely mistress, had his heart wrung by the thought that he was looking at her for the last time. The darkest forebodings thus distressed them both. The atmosphere in the little apartment was at last so overcharged that they left it almost with re-

lief, when the time came for Lydia to return home. Savinski accompanied her even into her room. It was there that they said their farewells.

As he was returning to the Aptiekarski Pereoulok, it seemed to Savinski that two men in civilian clothes were following him. He stopped at the corner of the Millionaia to light a cigarette. The two men passed him and went on their way without seeming to pay any attention to him. But when he passed under the entrance doorway of his house, he thought that he caught a glimpse of them on the opposite walk, a little behind him, in his own street.

The next day, he did not go out of his house until nearly two o'clock. He took the precaution of leaving by way of the service stairway and going through the house that opened on the Camp of Mars. There were several passers-by on the street that runs along the canal, but he noticed nothing suspicious and arrived without being disturbed at the Fontanka.

Once in the apartment, he hurried to the window and, from behind the curtains, looked out over the quay. Leaning against the parapet, in front of the barges loaded with wood, he saw a number of boatmen waiting for patrons. The winter sky was clear, the sun already low. The serenity of the landscape before him, calmed him a little. Since he had taken leave of Lydia, he had a continual fear of being arrested, an irrational fear that he could not shake off and that made him tremble in spite of himself. Every few minutes, he looked at his watch.

"Still fifteeen hours, still twelve hours, still ten hours before reaching the frontier."

And with every passing minute, the time that he had still to stay in Russia seemed to stretch out endlessly; he could think of nothing; his empty brain was occupied only in counting the seconds. About five o'clock he had tea and ate a little. At six o'clock, in a dark night, he went down to the Fontanka. The cold air did him good; his nerves grew calm. He went with a quick step to Nevski, where he took a sledge and had himself driven to a point near the Baltic Station. He was carrying only a light bag.

He went on foot the few hundred paces that separated him from the station. A crowd of people were jammed along the wooden barriers where two soldiers stood guard. One had to show a passport before going into the station. Savinski drew out his and entered without difficulty. In the station the crowd was not so thick. The train for Reval was already made up. Savinski took his way toward a second-class carriage.

As he was putting his foot on the steps, a voice behind him said,

"Nicholas Vladimirovitch. . . ."

Instinctively, he turned.

A man of medium height, in civilian clothes, wearing a short blond beard, was looking at him.

"Kindly come with me to the commissariat of the station, Nicholas Vladimirovitch."

Savinski, without protest, followed him.

After the hours of agony through which he had

just lived, he felt a strange sense of calm, of relaxation. Destiny had spoken.

An hour later, he was imprisoned at the Gorokhavaia. His entry on the record read:

"Has supported in Petrograd all attempts at insurrection against the Soviet Republic, was in liaison with Spasski, arrested March 1, 1919, at the Baltic Station, as he was trying to cross the frontier, bearer of a false passport."

XXV

PSKOF

A GRAY day in October in the ancient city of Pskof, something over two hundred versts to the southwest of the center of Soviet power in Petrograd. A sky of light fog clouds, through which the sun seemed trying to pierce here and there, hung above the ramparts dating from the Middle Ages and the old church with its five golden cupolas that dominated the Kremlin. Great excitement had prevailed on the preceding days in the narrow streets of Pskof. Groups of disbanded soldiers, belonging to the White Army of Youdenitch operating in the South, had passed through it in disorder, while the principal army, which had reached the very gates of Petrograd, was in retreat along the Gulf of Finland, in the direction of Narva. The sleeping city of Pskof had been filled with the noise of wagons rolling over its sharp paving-stones. Overloaded with provisions and refugees, they groaned over the pavements of the Sergievskaia. The thin little horses that were drawing them were covered with mud, for the autumn rains had turned the countryside to a marsh.

Now, all was silence again. Only a few belated sol-

diers were passing by, still without arms and going up toward the North.

By noon that day, there remained only a little detachment of the Red Cross, which, in its turn, was preparing to leave the city. It was quartered in a wooden house of the Empire style, at the southern extremity of the city, on the left bank that rises above the swollen and yellow waters of the Vileika. This spacious house had been, during the Great War, the dwelling of General Rousski, at the time when he was commanding the Army of the North against the Germans. During the offensive of Youdenitch against Petrograd, the Red Cross had been installed there. The wounded, of whom there were few, had been evacuated two days before. There remained only one soldier, a native of the region of Tambof, who was dying of typhus. The Major had seen him that morning and had decided that he would not live through the journey.

"He will hardly last twenty-four hours," he had said. "The servant here in the house will look after him."

Then, mounting his horse, he had gone on, wishing a safe journey to the Princess Lise Babarine, Superior of the Sisters of Charity, who was to follow him a few hours later with the only nurse left with her and a young medical student who had asked permission to accompany the two women. This student, hardly twenty and known as Anton Antonovitch Loukomski, was a charming lad, full of good humor and kindness, ready to help any one

and loved by every one. He recited the verses of Lermontof to the Sisters, at tea time, or hummed love songs to the accompaniment of the balalaika.

He was just then walking back and forth in a room where a frugal meal was served and the samovar was beginning to sing. As he walked, he was talking to the Princess Babarine, who was making up her records at a little table near a window. The Princess was a woman of over fifty, large, mannish, homely. But one forgot her homeliness from the moment of seeing her eyes, for one read in them only goodness and tenderness, a complete forgetfulness of self to think only of the suffering of others. Her husband, General in the Army of the Don, had been assassinated at her side by the Bolsheviks, in the streets of Novo-Tcherka a year before. She had succeeded in reaching the Crimea, Constantinople, France. But she had not stopped there; she had set out at once for Finland, where she had entered, in spite of her age, the Red Cross destined for the expeditionary corps of Youdenitch.

"Well then," Loukomski was saying, "everything is ready, Lise Ivanovna. In half an hour, our equipage will be at the door. . . . You will see the three horses that I have found you. They are excellent animals. . . . However fast the Red devils move, they will not be here before tomorrow, well on in the day. By that time we shall be already in safety. . . . I have tea, bread, sugar, eggs, two cold chickens, and an English officer has given me a pot of marmalade. . . . But where is Lydia Serguevna?"

"She is still in our room," said the Princess Babarine.

The medical student looked at the elderly lady, who kept her eyes on her papers. As he had, however, an irresistible longing to talk of Lydia Serguevna, he did not stop for that reason, but went on,

"What an admirable girl! She is always at her work. Nothing is too much for her. . . . There are not many Sisters of Charity who would accept the tasks that she takes. But how serious she is, Lise Ivanovna! I have never succeeded in making her laugh. And yet, I have said all sorts of foolish things to her, you know it. The most that I have been able to get is a smile. . . . Ah, if we had many women like her, Russia would soon be again the first country in the world. . . ."

At that moment, the servant, a white kerchief wrapped about her head, came in and asked the young student to come to the sick man, who was growing delirious. Loukomski followed her out.

The Princess, left alone by the window, let her eyes wander over the Vileika flowing below her. But her thoughts were with her whose name the student had just spoken. Since she had come to know Lydia, she had grown greatly attached to her. In the trouble that she was in, Lydia had concealed nothing from her. Savinski, arrested the very day that she had left Petrograd, had been imprisoned for eight months in the prison of the Kristi in Petrograd. She had received occasional news from him, often verbal, by prisoners who had been released. He was in fairly

good health; he made no complaint. He had not been brought before the revolutionary tribunal. It was evident, from the tone of his communications, that he did not wish to alarm Lydia.

On this information, the young girl founded great hopes. Without doubt, Semeonof, all-powerful through the favor of Trotski, was protecting her lover. Some human feeling still survived in the depths of the heart of that cold being and had kept him from letting them shoot a man with whom he had so long had friendly relations. The life of Savinski was in his hands. Lydia followed feverishly the play of changing influences in the politics of the Soviet and made her prayers that Trotski might remain in power. She had only one purpose in life: to return to Petrograd.

Her father, so long as he lived, had never opposed this project, for all its apparent madness. But death had taken him from her near Helsingfors, at the end of the summer.

He had succumbed to grief rather than to his illness. The truth was that he could not endure seeing his daughter unhappy, and, during the last of his life, by an inexplicable caprice of a sick man, he refused to see his wife and would have only Lydia near him. He took a feverish interest in the attempts that she made to obtain from the authorities permission to go back into Russia. The face of that grand old man, worn with care, had made an ineffaceable impression on the Princess Babarine. He had wanted to see her once, before Lydia should go

with her to Reval, and, finding words with difficulty, he had commended his daughter to her care.

The old Princess sighed.

What a drama it had been since they had left Helsingfors! At first, the magnificent hopes. Drums beating, the army of Youdenitch had succeeded in getting to the very outskirts of Petrograd. Lydia, then, was transfigured. Who could forget the inner fire that had burned in the depths of her lovely eyes? Then the bad days had come, the check, the retreat, the sinister rumors of executions en masse in Petrograd. Lydia had shut herself within her own heart. Not a complaint had escaped her. She remained obstinately silent, as if the prey of some fixed idea, meditating on one knew not what desperate project. Just how far would that burning soul drive her?

The Princess Babarine did not dare to think of it.

And now, today, they must leave Pskof and go back to Esthonia. The red flag would float for a long time yet over the Winter Palace in Petrograd and the Kremlin in Moscow.

Meanwhile, Loukomski had come back. His joyous humor at the thought of travelling with Lydia Serguevna was unendurable to the Princess, whose heart was torn with sorrow.

"We must have luncheon," he said. "Time is passing."

Just then Lydia came in and sat down silently at the table.

She was wearing the black uniform of the Sisters

of Charity. She had dressed her blond hair in two tight braids that she brought back above her forehead in the Russian fashion, and, below the nurse's cap, the oval of the face that had grown so thin was more delicately pure than ever. A few loose and curling locks, however, refused to bow to this strict discipline, escaping to assert, stronger than will, the power and vigor of youth. Her eyes were almost black, and they permitted one to read nothing in them.

Even Loukomski, little observing as he was—for, in the great impulse of love that swept him far from reality, how could he have the coolness to study Lydia—perceived it. With the ardor that the presence of the young girl inspired in him, he cried,

"What eyes you have lately, Lydia Serguevna! They are like the deep and limpid water in the mountain lakes. The banks are reflected in them, the trees, the rocks, the snows, and the sky. But they give no glimpse of what they cover. . . ."

Lydia smiled faintly and made no answer.

They ate their luncheon at first without speaking. Then the student, who could no longer keep silence, told of the walk that he had taken that day in the city.

"One no longer sees a single bourgeois," he said. "Where have those unfortunates hidden . . . ? The common people themselves are frightened. I talked with some of the women. 'What can they take from us?' they said. 'We have nothing.' But they are all afraid of the reprisals of the Reds, of

firing-squads, summary executions. It is a nightmare, I assure you. . . ."

The Princess Babarine, who had eyes only for Lydia, shuddered.

"Do not talk of these horrors, Anton Antonovitch, I beg you. . . ."

The young student stopped, astonished at the tone of her voice. A moment later he began again, addressing the young Sister of Charity.

"Civil war," he said, "is the most cruel of all wars. And it is the only kind that I have known. . . . Those were Russian soldiers who left Pskof yesterday, and these are Russian soldiers who will enter it tomorrow. . . . And this wretched civilian population that suffers without understanding. Why is it . . . ? What blood madness has seized upon this country . . . ? Do you remember the plaint of the beggar in 'Boris Goudounof': *'O malheur, ô malheur! laisse couler tes pleurs, peuple affamé. . . .'*

"And we, what will we be . . . ? Exiles. Were we made to live in a foreign country? I often ask myself, Lydia Serguevna, why I did not stay in Moscow. Perhaps I should be sweeping snow in the streets. But what of that, it would at least be Russian snow. And then, down there, I know every house in the city."

The Princess was watching the effect of these words in the face of her young friend. She saw her grow pale at first, then, to her great surprise, an expression of profound peace appeared on her face.

She seemed no longer suffering. The Superior herself felt at that moment the grip of an emotion that made her tremble. She could no longer endure Lydia's silence and those unfathomable eyes. She turned abruptly to Loukomski, saying to him,

"Go now, Anton Antonovitch, and see, please, if the carriage is ready."

Lydia, as if she had read the thoughts of the Princess, rose as soon as the student had gone out and came to sit close to her old friend. She slipped her arm around her neck and laid her head on the shoulder of the Princess, who kissed her forehead.

"I must talk to you, Lise Ivanovna," she said very sweetly. "I have waited too long already. . . . But I am going to cause you pain, I know, and that is why I have put it off so long. . . . Now, it is the last minute, it is time. . . . Only, perhaps you have already guessed what I am going to tell you . . . ? It seems to me that you have. . . . I am going to stay here."

The Princess made a gesture of horror.

Lydia, gently laying her fingers on her lips, went on,

"Yes, I know. . . . Do not say it. . . . But, what, even among the Reds there are human beings. . . . And then, I have no choice now. It is the only way of getting back to Petrograd."

She turned her pure eyes toward the wrinkled face of the Princess. The latter looked at her for a long time without speaking. She was reading to the depths of Lydia's soul. She saw there a resolution calm,

sure of itself, a flame that burned and that nothing could extinguish. She kissed that frail and courageous face three times, made above the young girl a great sign of the Cross, and said to her simply,

"God be with you, my child."

A quarter of an hour later, the carriage with three horses was carrying away from Pskof the old Princess, upright beneath her veils, and a young medical student who did not try to hide his tears.

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That same day, on an order of the famous commission extraordinary known as the Tcheka, a prisoner was released just at dusk from the Boutyrkii Prison in Moscow. He was a tall man, thin and worn, but in his pale face hope was relighting its flame. The repeated interventions of Semeonof, a person of importance in the councils of the Soviet, had resulted in bringing pardon and freedom to Nicolas Vladimirovitch Savinski, condemned to death.

Semeonof had given as the motive of his intervention the necessity for the Soviet Government to assure itself of the services of a remarkable financier. Did he also admit to himself that, if Savinski were dead, there would be nothing to bring back to Russia a young girl whom he still had the weakness to remember?

THE END

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